



**Facilitating domestic violence programmes:  
Listening to voices from the field.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In this project we undertook a formative evaluation of adult domestic violence programmes provided by Relationship Services Whakawhanaungatanga under the Domestic Violence Act of 1995. The project comprised three studies. In the first study we gathered the ideas of experienced men and women programme facilitators using focus group methodology. In the second study we analysed feedback written on evaluation forms. In the third study we consulted with Māori staff of Relationship Services Whakawhanaungatanga. We affirm that the facilitator-client relationship is central to programme effectiveness. We recommend that cultural and gender accountability practices are instituted, that facilitator training includes exploration of gender and power including facilitator reflexivity, that programme regulations are broadened to include whanau, and that programmes are constructed with built in flexibility to ensure effective education. We also suggest that facilitator training emphasises the importance of supervision as a means of monitoring facilitator wellbeing, professionally and personally.

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# I

## THE CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

*How might we promote a focus on individual responsibility for ceasing abusive acts, whilst recognizing that such behaviour is culturally constructed and informed by power relations and practices that are ubiquitous in the experience of all men? (Jenkins, 2009, p. 8)*

In this project we invited professional voices to speak from the field of domestic violence programmes. Sections 29 through 44 of the Domestic Violence Act 1995 include provision for educational programmes for both protected persons and perpetrators of violence (Domestic Violence Act 1995).

Recipients of Protection orders are mandated to attend Respondent Programmes, which have the primary objective of stopping or preventing domestic violence by the respondent. It is hoped that by increasing their understanding of the processes and effects of domestic violence, will lead to change in the respondents' behaviour. Alongside of new understandings, respondents will learn skills to deal constructively with conflict (Domestic Violence (Programmes) Regulations 1996).

Applicants of protection orders are invited to participate in Programmes for Protected Persons (adult), which are not compulsory. The goal is protection from violence by way of empowerment, increased understanding of intergenerational violence, increased awareness of the context in which violence occurs, assisting the assessment of safety, providing information, helping to develop expectations of change in the respondent, and identifying options for the future (Domestic Violence (Programmes) Regulations, 1996).

This study aimed to undertake formative evaluation of adult applicant and respondent programmes run by Relationship Services Whakawhanaungatanga (RSW) under the Domestic Violence Act, 1995. This research is timely, as currently in New Zealand there is social and political commitment to zero tolerance of family violence. For example in 2009 Principal Family Court Judge Peter Boshier felt sufficiently concerned about the level of Domestic Violence in New Zealand that he gave two speeches on the subject in 15 months. In the first speech (February 2009) he stressed the improvements that need to be made to allow the Family Court to achieve better access to justice for victims of domestic violence. In particular he questioned the productivity of our programmes and called for flexibility about who should be required to attend a programme. In the second (November 2009) he called for a radical rethink in the delivery of both prevention and intervention in domestic violence. The Campaign for Action on Family Violence In New Zealand and the “*It’s not OK*” publicity (McLaren, 2010) are bringing more mandated clients forward to take part in respondent programmes as well as more self referred clients who wish to change their behaviours around violence.

It is therefore an appropriate time to investigate the effectiveness of RSW programmes and to explore the philosophies and social and cultural practices, which are conveyed through our work with applicants and respondents to protection orders. Our exploration is threefold, including conversations with facilitators, evaluations from programme participants, and consultation with Māori RSW staff.

### **Rationale for formative rather than summative evaluation**

The voices we are listening to in this project are those who are involved in the work. They are speaking about the attitudes, knowledges and skills which they have experienced as effective in domestic violence programmes, in order to reflect on practice and discover expertise. The more usual focus on searching for outcomes to indicate effectiveness does not attend to the experience of those who have detailed knowledge of working in this field. We have chosen to honour the voices of first hand experience.

Measuring the outcomes of domestic violence programmes is problematic for many reasons (Chalk, 2000) including the ethical and political issues of no treatment groups and the difficulty of controlling factors external to the programme that might contribute to behaviour change. McMaster, Maxwell, & Anderson, (2000) noted these limitations when they explored the factors that enhance programme effectiveness. They found differences between accounts of participants and significant others in their perceptions of what constitutes violence and also in post programme behaviour changes. A simple measure that is reported frequently is recidivism rates (for example Hendricks, Werner, Shipway, & Turinetti, 2006). Measuring recidivism rates tells us nothing about the effect of the programme on the man's actions. For example, many men after completing a programme cease physical violence and move to more sophisticated methods of controlling their partner. Yet this outcome would not be counted in a measure of recidivism.

Outcome studies indicate that domestic violence programmes are more effective for men who volunteer for programmes than men who are mandated and for participants who complete programmes than for those who drop out (Berry, 2003; Hendricks, Werner, Shipway & Turinetti, 2006). Some, for example Jasinski (2005) and Carlson (2005) argue for more attention to individual differences requiring difference interventions, and others argue for more attention to contextual factors, for example, Lindhorst & Tajima (2008). Lindhorst & Tajima (2008) point out that research into intimate partner violence is notably lacking in its attention to contextual factors and present five dimensions of social context: the situational context, the social construction of meaning, cultural/historical contexts, and the context of systemic oppression. We were convinced of the importance of cultural and social context, and especially Māori thinking about the social context of family violence.

## **Cultural questions**

We were particularly interested to explore the ideas of Māori staff about importance of Māori world view and tikanga for Māori clients. Cram, Pihama, Jenkins, & Karehama (2002) Maxwell, Anderson & Olsen (2001) and Oliver (2006) conclude that domestic violence programmes are not meeting the cultural needs of Māori clients. We were impressed with the recommendations of the Second Māori Taskforce on whanau violence (Kruger, Pitman, Grennell, McDonald, Mariu, Pōmare, Mita, Maihi & Lawson-Te Aho, 2004). Similar concerns about inappropriate cultural contexts for domestic violence programmes are voiced by Crichton-Hill (2001; 2003) who argues for more culturally suitable programmes for Pasifika clients.

Walker (2004) describes “ontological violence,” that is produced through assumptions that Western approaches to violence are universally applicable and that those assumptions marginalise indigenous ways of working through conflict. The Domestic Violence (Programmes) Regulations 1996 accompanying the Domestic Violence Act have defined content and presentation and include Māori values and concepts for the programmes and the RSW programmes are written so that they can be adapted to local cultural groups. However these guidelines are put together in a Western world view, and restrict programmes to interventions with individuals (sometimes groups of individuals). The ideas about violence in programmes emphasise the power and control of one person as an explanation of family violence, and emphasise change as each person’s responsibility while separating them from their own family and cultural context. Also the awareness and attitudes of facilitators will always be subtly reproduced in their ways of working, and cultural privilege can remain invisible, for example being white (Haggis, Schech & Fitzgerald, 1999; Naughton & Tudor, 2006). The invisibility of cultural privilege raises concerns for cultural sensitivity in working with the increasingly multicultural population of Aotearoa New Zealand (Department of Statistics, 2008) that is reflected in the cultural diversity of clients who attend domestic violence programmes. We wondered what facilitators, clients and Māori consultants would

suggest to transform domestic violence programmes into culturally appropriate environments for Māori clients.

### **Effective programme strategies**

A variety of modalities for domestic violence interventions are described in the literature. Baker (2010) suggests that successful intervention programmes have a sound theoretical base and structure, use appropriate client assessment strategies, and focus on client engagement and facilitator effectiveness. Cagney (2009) calls for an integrated approach and suggests we take up a challenge to move beyond the polemics of education versus therapy, to education and therapy. We are convinced by the meta-analysis of outcome studies undertaken by Babcock, Green and Robie (2004) who found no indication that any one form of intervention was most effective. Like Chovanec (2009) and Rosenberg (2003), we were more interested in the meanings that facilitators make of their experiences of effective practice for reducing violence in families.

The literature on facilitator effectiveness is scarce. Chovanec (2009) researched facilitators in domestic violence programmes in North America, both how they engage men and what the men thought was most helpful in the programmes. He concluded workers needed to know who they were in terms of their own masculinity, be non-judgmental, and to be able to model the kind of behaviours they were teaching the men on the programme to adopt. He also found that the validation of client experience was identified as important by a majority of facilitators across programmes. Rosenberg (2003) found overall elements that were most helpful were primarily relational ones, such as group support and therapist/facilitator alliances. The factors rated as next important were specific strategies of handling anger and other emotions, and the skills of interpersonal communication.

It is clear in the DVA regulations that DVA programmes are required to be educational rather than therapeutic. The need for a relationship between teacher and learner is clearly documented in educational literature, which shows that a close, positive and supportive relationship between teacher and students is essential for developing

learning potential and for responding appropriately to challenging behaviour. Relationships are fundamental to learning. “Teachers cannot be aloof, detached or apolitical” (Gill, 2006, p. 17). An effective teacher establishes a learning environment that is “needs-based, positive and inclusive” (Arthur et al., 2003). In his work with sex offenders Nigel Latta (2003) describes how it is necessary to have compassion for the person in order to be able to engage them.

Day, Chung, Leary, & Carson (2009) highlight the critical role of the therapeutic alliance in effective programme delivery. They point out that the alliance refers to three different aspects of the relationship between the client and therapist: the collaborative nature of the relationship; the affective bond between client and therapist; and the client and therapist’s ability to agree on treatment goals and tasks. An effective alliance has been shown to be a moderate, but significant and consistent predictor of positive treatment outcome across a variety of therapeutic modalities and client groups. The conclusions from this literature indicate that programmes which do not attend to the development of strong therapeutic alliances will be less likely to be effective.

Although some of the domestic violence literature suggests a confrontational approach to working with abusive men, research has shown (Gondolf, 2002) that how and when the challenge comes is more important than confrontational style. A more balanced approach of support and challenge is validated by Silvergleid & Mankowski, (2006) who found that both facilitators and programme graduates agreed that a balanced approach was the key to an effective change process.

Alan Jenkins (2009) describes his work with violent men as “Reaching out towards the world of the other, “ (p. xii) and as “invitational practice” - a collaborative journey towards becoming ethical and towards becoming accountable. Perhaps the most significant consolidation in Jenkins’ invitational theory and practice is the notion of the ‘parallel journey for workers.’ This idea refers to understandings of the political nature of intervention and the belief that our journeys as workers must mirror the journeys of

our clients. “The maintenance of our own journeys towards becoming ethical has far more substantial impact in assisting our clients to challenge abusive behaviour than any practice methods or techniques for intervention” (Jenkins, 2009, p.xiii). In this project we include consideration of parallel journeys, particularly regarding reflective practice.

Augusta-Scott (2001) pointed out that a dilemma for male workers is to ensure that they are not colluding with men’s violence while at the same time ensuring that they do not step into ways of being with the men that replicate dominant masculine ways of being. McLean (2001, p. 62) described the dilemma as “how can we work with men respectfully, confronting when necessary, joining when possible, and always acknowledging the complexities of men’s lives without ending up colluding with their violent and dominating practices and belief?” Jenkins (2009), Bennett & Williams (2001), Verco (2001), McLean (2001), Hall (1996) and White (1992) all argue for the necessity that male facilitators recognize and acknowledge their own participation in dominant male culture and reflect on the potential for them to reproduce this in their practices. McLean, Carey, & White (1996) affirm the importance of working alongside women as a means to challenging gender essentialism.

It is also suggested that facilitators’ engagement with men’s experience makes it much more possible for the men to be invited to step towards responsible and alternative ways of being men. Respectful deconstruction of gender experiences enables the dismantling of the ‘them and us’ binary in which non-violent facilitators and violent men find themselves unwittingly positioned (Augusta-Scott, 2001, 2007; Jenkins, 2009). Verco (2001, p. 57) argues that if male workers hold a position of being ‘other’ or in anyway superior to the men doing the programme, or if they are punitive in some way in their interactions, then this replicates the patriarchal culture and minimizes the chance of meaningful change for clients.

People approach Relationship Services Whakawhanaungatanga (RSW) because of the agency's focus on intimate relationships. Clients frequently name violence as a concern in their relationship, not necessarily as belonging to one particular person, but rather as relational. Anecdotal reports from counsellors have told us that this is often the case when a couple is referred to RSW via Restorative Justice, to address violence in a relationship. Facilitators of programmes in RSW bring a relational understanding of violence into their work.

Understanding violence as relational is consistent with Johnson's (Johnson, 2005; Johnson & Leone, 2005) description of intimate partner violence as being of three types (a) violence enacted in the service of taking general control over one's partner (*intimate terrorism*); (b) violence utilized in response to intimate terrorism (*violent resistance*); and (c) violence that is not embedded in a general pattern of power and control, but is a function of the escalation of a specific conflict or series of conflicts (*situational couple violence*). Violence can also be read as strategy for regulating emotional and physical proximity (Allison, Bartholomew, Maysel, & Dutton, 2008).

We wondered what this project would tell us about effective strategies for working with different forms of relationship violence and whether participants' preferred strategies would be consistent with the findings in the literature.

### **Questions of gender**

The guidelines for programmes since 1996 have taken an ideological approach which emphasises the centrality of how traditional male power operates to subject women in domestic violence situations. In this project we prefer to take a Foucauldian position and understand that power is not an entity that belongs to individuals, but that it is capillary, multi directional, and always at work in social power relations (Foucault, 2002). In this project, our perspective is informed by such writers as Jenkins (2009), Hall (1996) and Denborough (1996) who track the workings of power in domestic violence programmes. "Power and self are central to working in the area of DV, and

responsibility and blame are key words. Violence, power and gender are linked and many men have tried creative ways to deal with this" (Hall, 1996, p. 227). All our identities are suffused with issues of power and control. Identity, far from a universal or essentialist entity, is therefore a political construction. As Denborough (1996, p. 94) points out, this also means that the choices we make are not totally free - rather, they are interrelating with far broader power relations, restrictions and options.

Gender power relations become complex when viewed through Foucauldian lenses, with awareness that understanding the effects of patriarchal social structures is only one of many useful ways of unraveling how gender operates in family violence. The term "patriarchal" refers here to social institutions which reproduce the power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men. Our ideas about gender are informed particularly by the work of poststructuralist feminists especially Valerie Walkerdine (1989), Bronwyn Davies (1993; 2000) and Patti Lather (1991; 2007). We want to explore the complexity of how gender operates in ideas about domestic violence and "...we do not agree that patriarchy...is a monolithic force which imposes socialisation on girls...[rather it] produces positions for subjects to enter" (Walkerdine 1989, p. 205). Our approach to reading the conversations in this project is to disentangle the complexities of power and gender in the shifting positions taken by people as they speak.

Bev James and Kay Saville-Smith (1989) offer a New Zealand perspective on how historical discourses such as the "cult of domesticity," "dependent woman," moral redemptress," "man alone" and "family man" have created what they call a gendered culture. They argue that this gendered culture is actively created and maintained locally by men and women. Dixon (2000, 2002) draws attention to the way discursive positioning has women performing gendered subjectivities around responsibility and guilt for men's violence.

From an Australian perspective Verco (2001) concludes that talking about how men's violence is linked to broader power relations of gender has been and continues to be, crucial in the work undertaken with violent men. He gives three reasons. First, it breaks from woman blaming practices, and invites men (both individually and collectively) to take responsibility for ending their violence. Second, it does not locate the problem of violence as within individual men but instead as a product of culture. Finally, it means that male workers are invited into constant vigilance to ensure that they do not inadvertently replicate cultural practices that perpetuate gender injustice (2001, p. 56).

Verco's (2001) ideas also support the practices of accountability to women partners. Through discussion with women partners and their children workers are able to more realistically gauge the effectiveness and appropriateness of the work undertaken with men who engage in practices of violence and abuse. These ideas are supported in the North American literature also. Bennett & Williams (2001) conclude that to work closely with criminal justice authorities, a local victim services agency and victim advocates boosts programme effectiveness. McLean (2001) believes that one of the most important aspects of the work with violent men is that male workers recognize and acknowledge their own participation in dominant male culture and the potential for them to reproduce this in their ideas and ways of working.

We were interested in the gender positions that would be taken up in talking about violence and the work of facilitation. We are aware that many inconsistent positions are available in accounting for how gender and violence interact in families and in the work with clients.

### **The impact of the work on facilitators**

Facilitating domestic violence programmes is recognised to produce "burnout" (Bahner, & Berkel, 2007; Iliffe & Steed, 2000). During the past 10 years, researchers have examined this experience under several constructs: compassion fatigue (Figley, 2002), secondary traumatic stress (Stamm, 1995/ 1999), and vicarious trauma (Baird & Kracen, 2006;

McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995), forms of work-induced posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Figley, 2002; Herman, 1992; McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995; Wilson & Lindy, 1994). Wicks (2003) speaks of the importance of maintaining perspective for practitioners working with the effects of trauma. Regular supervision is provided for facilitators over and above supervision for other areas of clinical work. Supervision offers a forum for reflecting on practice, to attend to effective ways of working and to debrief any crises that might have occurred. We expect that facilitators will speak about supervision as a site for maintaining hope for the work and for storying professional identity (Crocket, 2007).

There are also positive effects for facilitators. Holly Bell (2003) argues that practitioners who work from a strengths approach are less likely to experience secondary trauma because of their interest in discovering resourcefulness and strength in their clients' lives. She describes the difference between a facilitator operating from an expert position and a collaborator who respects and encourages the strengths of the client. We are inviting facilitators with many years' experience in the field who continue to find the work satisfying, and we look forward to discovering how they account for their ongoing enthusiasm. We expect that they will talk about the relationships they build with clients (Day, Chung, Leary, & Carson, 2009) and the sense of meaning experienced in making a contribution to the community (O'Connor & Chamberlain, 1996). In this project we are seeking feedback from facilitators to discover if there are detrimental effects associated with the work of programme facilitator, and what sustains facilitators in continuing their commitment to working in domestic violence prevention.

The questions which directed our conversations with participants and the analysis of the texts which resulted were fourfold: What do facilitators say are effective practices in facilitating DVA programmes? How do facilitators account for their ability to maintain energy and hope for the work? What do people completing DVA programmes describe as most effective and memorable about the programme? And what messages do Māori staff in RSW have for us in recommending culturally appropriate practice in DVA programmes?

## II

# METHODOLOGY

### Research design

This qualitative research used an emergent research design (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Within an emergent design research project there is an opportunity to be responsive to participant input and feedback as the design evolves and to refine the line of inquiry accordingly (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). We were interested in facilitator knowledge and wanted a method of data collection that would maximize opportunities for participants to share ideas with their colleagues and shape these ideas into best practice. We decided to use focus groups (Kreuger & Casey, 2000) as a means of generating data that is grounded in the field being explored.

Focus groups have many advantages. They are low cost, therefore enabling us to access participants from around New Zealand, and they are rich in providing data. They are based on group interaction and so can often reap a richer pool of information than one-one meetings. (Patton (1990) cited in Flick (2002, p. 113) sees the focus group as “a highly effective qualitative data-collection technique [which provides] some quality controls on data collection in that participants tend to provide checks and balances on each other that weed out false or extreme views... and it is fairly easy to assess the extent to which there is a relatively consistent shared view ... among the participants”. As Flick (2002, p. 114) says group discussion is more akin “...to the way in which opinions are produced, expressed and exchanged in everyday life.”

The focus group provided a social forum and the opportunity for discussion, reflection and interpretation of the topic. We wanted to provide forums for mixed focus groups as well as gender specific groups. We have used the idea of caucusing as it is put forward by McLean,

Carey and White (1996) and Tamasese and Waldegrave, (1994) who argued that this process of letting separate gender groups speak as a group in front of the other gender group enables groups from different positions of power to treat each other respectfully and to gain an insight into each other's experience. We consulted with Māori staff in a Māori setting similarly to equalize the balance of power in gathering data.

We believed that an emergent research design using focus groups was an effective way of conducting 'bottom up research' coupled with reflective practice. According to Day (1999), in talking about teachers and teaching, "to practice [teach] effectively means, engaging routinely in conscious, systematic collection and evaluation of information about these areas and the relationships between them which affect and result from practice" (p. 216). Our research is about DV programme facilitators who deliver educative programmes. Therefore this study took place in the context of experienced programme facilitators reflecting on their practice. Reflecting on practice (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Schön, 1983) is a strategy for increasing the skills and confidence of people collaborating to explore possibilities in the work, a strategy found to produce effective practice (Miller, Duncan, Hubble & Wampold, 2009). Donald Schön (1983) popularized the notion of reflection 'in' and 'on' action, the former taking place during the action and often being tacit, the latter outside the action, thus enabling more conscious, systematic evaluation of performance. Day (1999) suggests, "both seek to identify areas for change by seeking consistencies and inconsistencies within and between intentions and practices and then planning for action which will improve these" (p. 218).

Bottom up research (Dixon, 1999; O'Connor, 1999) is so called because it subverts the dominant positivist research paradigm. As O'Connor explains:

This [positivist paradigm] would have us believe that theory informed the research, and the research in turn reached conclusions which informed expert knowledges, privileging theory over practice. Turning this process on its head transforms research practices, and the research becomes the property of the researched. We have conversations with people to enable the theorising of

experiences, and from that talk we develop questions, and that talk informs local knowledges (Shotter, 1998). The ordinary is the focus of our attention; in Michael White's words, the domestic is exoticised (White, 1991). Practice is recognised as the ground from which theory arises. Reflexivity (Lather, 1991) and reciprocity (Oakley, 1981) are now the criteria for validity. Overturning the theory-practice relationship brings the power relations inherent in the research process to the foreground, and "good theory" is possible only when research practices are enabling for participants in the research. (1999, p. 3)

Middleton (1998) points out that Foucault "urged social researchers to focus not so much on the global, but on the local and particular. We should, he said, research the apparatuses of power less from the top-down point of view of policy makers, and more from the bottom-up perspective of everyday life" (Middleton 1998, p. xvi). In this project, using emergent design methodology through focus groups, we are enacting praxis as we learn from participants.

### **Provisions for trustworthiness**

In qualitative research trustworthiness and credibility replace reliability and validity of data and findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The following were the provisions for trustworthiness in this research:

1. Multiple methods of data collection. We used focus groups, individual interviews to extend our understanding of the texts of the group conversations and analysis of already completed programme evaluation forms.
2. Data triangulation (Denzin, 1989). We sourced data from male and female programme facilitators as well as male and female applicants and respondents of DV programmes. Our third source of data is the existing research literature on the efficacy of DV programmes.
3. Peer debriefing. Both lead researchers carried out transcription and thematic analyses independently of each other. We then came together using the constant comparative

method of data analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) to compare and contrast our analyses. In this way we were able to negotiate our collaborative understanding.

4. Member checks. Drafts of our analyses were sent back to participants for their comments. This enacted reciprocity (Oakley, 1981).

Both researchers had worked as clinical leaders in Relationship Services until July (Kay) and October (Glenda) 2008. By the time of the focus groups in May 2009, we had both been working in private practice since the previous October. As we designed and carried out the research we took into account the possible effects of our previous collegial and supervisory relationships on the contributions of participants. In particular we were concerned that as the previous supervisors of five of the participants (Glenda three, Kay two), our theories of domestic violence might silence voices with different perspectives from our own. In constructing the focus groups, we made sure that those either of us had supervised were in the group being videotaped by the other researcher. We set up the recording equipment for the gendered focus groups and absented ourselves from the room. In the gender caucus conversations, we withdrew from the groups and remained behind the cameras. Our relationships with participants will have inevitably affected how people spoke despite our efforts. We hope that the advantages of collegiality may have enabled contributions even while our presence may also have silenced some voices both in the data collection phase and in our reading of the texts.

## III METHOD

The data for this project was collected in three studies:

Study One: Facilitator voices: Focus groups (May 2009) and follow-up conversations (January to April 2010)

Study Two: Client voices: evaluations dating from 1996 to 2009)

Study Three: Māori voices: Consultation with Māori (October, 2009)

### **Study one: Facilitator voices**

#### **Participants**

The participants in the focus groups were employees of Relationship Services Whakawhanaungatanga with more than three years' experience as facilitators of programmes for applicants and respondents of protection orders under the Domestic Violence Act, 1995. Eight women and ten men responded to the invitation to participate in the focus groups during a RSW domestic violence training hui in Wellington on 15 - 16 May 2009. All were members of a professional association (NZAC, ANZASW, NZVPA, NZPsS, NZAP) and represented a good geographical spread throughout New Zealand from Tai Tokerau through to Dunedin.

#### **Warming up to the focus groups**

The first activity entitled "Sharing our expertise" was a warm up to the work and the research. Participants were each given a large sheet of paper and 10 minutes to think about and write in response to the question "What are 3-4 things I know in my heart that work to bring about change." These sheets of paper were then put on the wall for participants to read and discuss. After discussion, a second question was put to the participants to reflect on and write on large sheets of paper to share. "What are the 3-4 resources/ exercises/ conversations, that you often use that you think most make a

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difference in the room with a client?" The ideas written on the sheets were collated and later sent back to participants.

Participants were then put into two focus groups. Mindful of power relations, careful consideration was given to the makeup of these groups. Men and women were evenly divided and those people who had organizational responsibility (i.e. Clinical Leaders) were not placed in the same groups as the counsellors they had supervised.

### **The focus groups**

The researchers took a focus group each and explained that the floor was open for discussion, that the exercise would take 90 minutes, that the guiding question was about what we know from working in the field of domestic violence and what we want to say about our experience in this work. We purposely left the instructions open, as we did not want to place agendas in the group and influence the discussion in any way. Each group was audio and video recorded.

On the morning of the second day participants were placed into two gendered focus groups. Both groups lasted 90 minutes and the researchers left the groups. A participant from each group was designated to keep the time and put the discussion back on track if need be. Conversations in both of these groups were audio and video taped.

At the conclusion of the gender segregated focus groups we conducted two gendered reflections. The women facilitators reflected on what they had spoken about in the women's focus group. While they reflected the male participants sat in a circle around the women's circle and listened. The women talked among themselves and did not address the men directly. The men experienced this as "listening in" to the women's conversation. The groups were swopped at the end of 20 minutes and the men sat in the centre circle while the women sat on the outside. The men reflected on what they had heard the women say. These two conversations were audio and video taped.

## **The analysis**

There were video and audio tapes of the six group conversations from Study 1: two parallel focus groups, two gender focus groups (one men and the other women) and a gender reflection exercise. These tapes were transcribed, all information which might identify participants was removed, and transcripts filed in coded computer files on each researcher's computer.

Each researcher read the transcribed conversations, analysed texts into the following five themes and then we pooled our resources and negotiated eight themes to write a summary of the analysis to return to participants. In the final analysis and discussion, these themes were restructured as five:

1. The social constitution of violence
2. Polarisation and more effective positions
3. Flexibility and effective education
4. Empathy and engagement
5. The impact on facilitators of work in domestic violence

## **Follow-up conversations**

Summaries of the analysis were sent to each participant and follow up questions asked to invite feedback (Appendix C). The response rate (6) was very disappointing. Some participants responded by email, and we were able to interview others. The reflections of these six participants have been incorporated into the results and discussion section of this report alongside the analysis of the focus group conversations.

## **Study Two: Client voices**

Programme participants (applicants and respondents of protection orders) fill out evaluation forms in the final session of their programmes, and these forms are collected and held in RSW offices for evaluation and review.

All areas of RSW were asked to forward to the research team through National Office the evaluation forms of male and female respondents' and protected persons' programmes. These forms date back to 1996. We received 1027 forms of which 26 were eliminated from the data. There were 4 duplicates, 5 that were unable to be deciphered, 3 were the incorrect forms, and 14 were the facilitators' evaluations included by mistake. Evaluation forms do not specify whether the programme completed is a respondent's or protected person's programme, or whether the client is male or female. Because the facilitator's name is included on the form, we sorted into male or female by the sex of the facilitator except where the content of the form told us differently. We used the information on the form to decide whether the programme was a respondent's or protected person's programme. This method of sorting will have inevitable errors of categorisation, including the categorisation of male protected persons as respondents.

A total of 1001 forms constituted the data to be analysed.

Protected women 174

Respondent women 66

Protected men 0

Respondent men 761

### **The analysis**

Two questions on the evaluation form relate to programme effectiveness. Question 1: What did you find most useful about the programme, and Question 3: What is the thing you remember most from the programme. We read through the responses and formed nine categories which would capture the most frequent responses. We had an "Other" category which did not capture more than nine responses for a possible extra category. There are therefore nine categories of responses in our analysis as follows:

1. Understanding emotions
2. Strategies for managing anger and/or violence
3. Therapeutic relationship
4. Being listened to

5. Improved communication skills
6. Healing the past
7. Improved relationships partner and/or family
8. Self responsibility
9. Commitment to a violence-free life.

In recording responses, for each form we counted only the first response in any category. This means that some forms scored a hit in several categories and others in only one. In this way we focussed on factors in effectiveness reported across the evaluations.

The responses were put into a simple table then checked and totalled. These figures were then fed into *Pages 09* a Macintosh word processing programme to produce three bar graphs.

### **Study three: Māori voices**

In planning the study, we asked the RSW Bi-cultural Reference Group to guide us as to how best consult with Māori. As a result, when in late October 2009, the Māori RSW staff met at Otaramarae (Pounamunui), a Ngati Pikiao marae on the northern shore of Lake Rotoiti, we were invited to consult with our Māori colleagues on the second day of the hui.

There were ten participants, nine of who worked for RSW and one Ngati Pikiao consultant. The RSW staff included counsellors, facilitators and administrators. The consultation began with the researchers describing the purpose of the research and answering any questions. The ensuing two conversations were audio taped and lasted for approximately 2 hours with a break for refreshments half way through.

### **The analysis**

The researchers transcribed the tapes, read the transcripts, analysed themes in these texts and then worked together to write a summary of this thematic analysis. We returned this summary to those who were at the hui. We invited feedback, which might strengthen or de-emphasise our findings, so that we could synthesise their feedback into our final report.

## **Ethical Considerations**

### **Informed consent**

Potential participants in Study One of the project were given an Information sheet (Appendix A) and Informed Consent Agreement Form (Appendix B) alongside the invitation to the workshop. Participants were asked to send us feedback on the summary of the analysis they were sent (Appendix C letter to accompany return of transcripts). Individual interviews were carried out with six participants from the focus groups in Study One in person or by email.

The historical client evaluation forms in Study Two carry no identification. We were therefore not able to contact the writers. However each person who completes a DVA programme knows that the forms will be used to evaluate participants' ideas about the programme.

Participants in Study Three of the project were given an Information sheet and Informed Consent Agreement Form (Appendix A and Appendix B) alongside the invitation to take part in the research consultation held during the hui. All members of the hui gave informed consent to take part in the consultation. Participants were asked to send us feedback on the summary of the analysis that we would send to them.

## **Confidentiality**

Participants (facilitators, and the Māori group) were sent a summary of the analysis of the focus group or hui conversations. All such contributions had any identifying material removed, and codes be used. Tapes and transcripts were in a secure file and were retained by the researchers until the completion of the study when the tapes were destroyed.

## **Potential harm to participants**

It was not foreseen that any harm could be done to participants. However, EAP counselling was available to anyone should the process of reflection have raised issues which needed to be resolved.

## **Participants' right to decline**

The question of ongoing informed consent is problematic when group conversations form the texts which are the object of study. For this reason, once the drafts of the analysis have been sent to all participants for editing and returned to the researchers, the opportunity to decline ended.

## **Arrangements for participants to receive information**

The members of the focus groups and the Māori group received (and will continue to receive) copies of any draft papers or programme resources for comment.

## **Conflicts of interest**

We, the researchers, were both involved in the workshops. Any differences of understanding were negotiated so that rather than a conflict of roles, we experienced an enrichment of the work we are doing. Both researchers have in the past been employees of RSW and had been in clinical leadership roles, which will have inevitably influenced the gathering of data as discussed in the methodology section.

## **Ethics approval**

Ethics approval was obtained through the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee in early 2009.

## IV

### STUDY ONE: FACILITATOR VOICES

*The real art is in the building of a relationship between you and him so that he actually listens. He's never going to do that unless he feels like he is bumping up against something real. He won't stop because you threaten him, or scare him, or reason with him, or present him with a logical argument. If logic and reason worked we wouldn't have any crime, so why do we persist in approaching the treatment of criminals with 'logical' and 'reasoned' approaches?*

*It is compassion which builds the connection that makes the magic work. (Latta, 2003 p. 110)*

### Results and discussion

The results and discussion of our analysis of the texts of the focus groups and follow-up conversations are organized into five themes.

1. The social constitution of violence
2. Polarisations and more effective positions
3. Flexibility and effective education
4. Empathy and engagement
5. The impact on facilitators of work in domestic violence

We present our discussion as an interweave of our readings of the texts, quotations from the texts, and references to the literature which informs our readings.

#### **The social constitution of violence**

We read violence through our understandings of the writings of Foucault and the work of those who take a Foucauldian approach to violence and power, especially Alan Jenkins (1996, 2009). Our reading understands violence to be socially produced and supported, and that violence occurs between and among people rather than being the property of a particular individual. Violence is conceptualized and understood in a political context which is woven of intersecting and interconnected power relations, and practices which are often hidden or invisible to participants. Our concepts of self or

identity, including notions of masculinity, are produced in this context.

Participants spoke of how their work with people who have experienced violence has informed their own understandings of the complexities involved:

greater awareness of what constitutes violence, I think (FG1:4)

I was reminded of something that came up in the second reflection group. About the noticing of the acknowledging that the client that we are working with is also in their own space a victim and the importance of acknowledging that. (FG1:1)

a lot of the conversations I'm having throughout the sessions with the men is around their own experiences and some of that Alan Jenkins stuff around entitlement theory and ... that if he has these entitlements then she has these responsibilities. .... often I'll take them through something like that and talk to them about ... you know.. a lot of men have had experiences about knowing what it's like as children to have to be aware of other people's entitlements (FG1:74)

Social constructionism speaks about violence not as an internal characteristic of one person, but as operating in our society at large and among people. Violence takes many forms from the shocking and dramatic to the subtle and invisible. Participants' accounts take up a social constructionist position and say that violence is socially contexted, and that it is prevalent in many forms in our society:

What do you think about the idea that of the people in the group - who are perpetrating violence actually are just conforming to society - perhaps just over conforming to what is there in society - when you think of the larger picture... you know.... of war pictures where the whole country is being bombed out... and young men and women being sent off to war. and the movies and cartoons that we have on TV ..... that they are just actually over conforming to what is in our society . (FG2:126)

Participants note that these ideas are useful in reframing our clients' understandings about how violence is produced and reproduced and how it operates in their lives:

so that the person thinks that there is something wrong with them, and that's when by us putting it into a context of us women, or putting it into a society context, it actually lifts it away from them and them being the problem. Puts it in a society context so it makes them think "Well, I am not to blame, for this. This is something about the messages that we all receive." (WC:38)

I'm hearing that its not just about working with the other - with the partner or the child its also working the culture - with the bigger level because power is enacted within a relationship isn't it so you can't expect - in some ways - hearing what you've said - for it to be any other way, because you put the person back in r/ship - with anything. (FG2:6)

As facilitators of DVA programmes with many years experience in DVA work, the

participants in this project have a sophisticated understanding of the production and effects of violence in family relationships. However, we all have available ways of speaking and thinking that are historical, that are the early layers of writing on the palimpsest of ideas about gender and violence which are alive and well even if apparently silenced.

Do you think that the issues that underpin how we see things like power and control in NZ at the moment are changing? We have a history in our country, legislation which enshrined rights for men against women in their relationships. Now that legislation no longer exists, but what has changed since then... what has actually changed? I was alive when that legislation was still in place so we have three or four generations who are still breathing still talking still thinking still acting. What about them? What has changed for them and how does that impact on how we work with those people? (MFG:1)

... we are in danger of repeating mistakes if we don't take notice of history and history has told us that in our society we have structures in the past which have disadvantaged some and advantaged others.... We had legislation which gave property rights of one person over another we had legislation which gave sexual rights of one person over another. Even though things have changed the legacy of them still remains and we have an obligation to educate around that as well as working with what is going on for them right now (MFG:7)

We found in reading the texts that these old layers of social inscriptions constantly undermined social construction ideas of gender and violence. We are not surprised by inconsistencies in talk about violence, but we do wonder about how these inconsistencies might affect our work with clients. The following discusses how talking about gender and violence surfaces problematic gender polarities.

### **Polarisations and more effective positions**

Conversations about domestic violence are inevitably woven from deeply ingrained stories of men and women, perpetrators and victims, reason and irrationality. Right/wrong, guilty/innocent are binaries which shape our world and which feel comfortable to us. They are available to us as subject positions in discourse. Our discourses of violence for instance give us very few options, 'victim' and 'perpetrator' being the most readily available. Every discourse has within it subject positions. These are the subject positions that are available for people to occupy when they are called into this discourse. Within the perpetrator discourse the subject positions available are

'guilty' or 'not guilty' and within the discourse of 'guilt' we come to 'shame.' As Davies and Harré (1990) put it:

the constitutive force of each discursive practice lies in its provision of subject positions. A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights for those who use that repertoire. Once having taken up a particular position as ones own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines, and concepts that are made relevant within the particular discursive practices in which they are positioned. (p. 89)

In the focus groups on day one, the perpetrator/victim binary was very present, and after the gender caucuses, the male/female binary captured the conversation. We have wondered whether the sequencing of activities in the hui produced the gender split, and on reflection we realised that these ideas about violence and gender are deeply embedded in our culture, and conversations about domestic violence rehearse the old ideas again. We noticed that informal conversations among participants accessed ways of speaking about violence as interactional, not the property of individuals, but contexted in relationships in situations of stress and conflict.

In the group conversations, and especially in the women only focus group, dramatic stories of guilty men and innocent women produced both male/female and perpetrator/victim positions. While participants struggled to shift the conversation to a collaborative and explorative ground, this struggle failed to find that ground for the group. In the gender caucuses where these points were reflected on, the women took up a position that was declared to be inaccessible for men's understanding:

We started both talking about the stories that we think will never get told in the men's group because they are so subtle. (WC:2)

I don't know if men consciously know they are doing them, or whether those are the sorts of things that get spoken about in groups. I can't imagine, having once had the privilege of sitting in on a men's group, that I didn't hear that they even would have noticed. (WC:9)

Talking about that here we are talking about an incident and I was thinking how would - it seems like you wouldn't want to describe it in mixed company. (WC:27)

I am thinking what would it mean, that woman, the shame of saying it to you, she could never have said that to a man. (WC:28)

The men's responses to the women's conversation spoke of the silencing effect of the women's conversation:

I noticed for myself um is that as conversations took place, there was a patch about half way through where I noticed that my head was down and I started to feel incredibly inadequate and I remember thinking I can't do this work (MC: 2)

the word that was in my mind was helpless - feeling helplessness around it. (MC:3)

I have another piece of me that sits under it and it was sort of rising as you were speaking and I realized it was there before for me too and I think this one pisses me off. That there is something forbidden that I shall not hear (MC:10)

In the men's response to the women's conversation the comparison was made between male/female and Māori /Pakeha differences:

It's no different than working with Māori . If I'm Pakeha I'm Pakeha, this is my identity this is my growing up no matter how hard I try I'm never going to fully understand what growing up Māori is. (MC:35)

This connection was developed further in the reflections stage after participants had read the transcript summaries. When conversations allude to injustices and oppression in the past, those who identify as associated with the oppressor are silenced:

At the hui, informal one to one conversations were different from focus group conversations. We need to shift out of polarisations of perpetrator-victim or male-female. The women's conversation silenced the men. The same thing can happen in Pakeha - Māori conversations; when Māori talk about Pakeha oppression, Pakeha are silenced. It is a long-term effect of historical oppression. (R:1)

the both/and rather than either/or, blame argument. Like Māori /pakeha argument. If you do the victim discourse then it automatically evokes the perpetrator discourse. (R:4)

We are concerned about the possibility of these polarities being present in facilitators' work, since we are inevitably accompanied by our attitudes and beliefs about gender, culture and violence. Even though many facilitators were beyond the idea of fault and blame, they were often unwittingly pulled back into fault and blame discourses. We were at a loss to understand this strong pull backwards when we knew that the participants were all aware of the unhelpfulness of fault and blame discourses that

position women as victims and men as perpetrators and moreover we understood that they had all moved beyond that dichotomy in their own work. We were drawn to the poststructural work of Bronwyn Davies to make some sense of this:

Postcolonial discourses have given us a strange and complex legacy in which white Anglo groups see themselves on occasion as both culturally superior and morally inferior, while colonized others are romanticized, protected, and still held, largely, on the margins. (2000, p. 28)

We suggest that this same and complex legacy applies to gender discourses. When the women caucused, the political foundations and implications became visible, and their conversations moved to experiences of women being 'colonized' by men. For women, the oppressor was patriarchy. For Māori, the oppressor was the Crown. Bronwyn Davies (p. 28) argues that when indigenous people meet with colonisers, "the primary moral emotion is guilt associated with an inherited responsibility for displacement of indigenous peoples". We suggest that this happens when male and female groups meet to talk about domestic violence, or when Māori and pakeha groups meet to talk about colonization, inevitably for men and pakeha there is an experience of guilt and shame. Davies argues "by locating responsibility within themselves they maintain a sense of their own agency (albeit flawed agency) and thus position those who were wronged as without agency." Davies further suggests:

for those who deny feelings of guilt and refuse the moral implications of post colonial discourses, their position is still, albeit in terms of negation, defined in relation to those same discourses: they are either guilty or not guilty - it is not possible to be neither at this point in time. (Davies, 2000, p. 29)

The men in this study express the emotions which were woven into their being silenced:

As I'm sitting here listening to the women talk I was kind of drifting in and out of these moments of, um ,..... personal responsibility.....ah..... role responsibility.... my response to what I was hearing ... and there would be times when I was identifying with what you [names another participant] were talking about, about that kind of feeling helpless.... then it would just ...zip.....evaporate away and I would sit with that and go OK I do not have to have a solution to that, I do not have to fix this problem. (MC: 7)

I noticed for myself, um, is that as conversations took place, there was a patch about half way through where I noticed that my head was down and I started to feel incredibly inadequate and I remember thinking I can't do this work. Hearing those stories and I watched my thinking - it stayed with the stories and then it ran and ran another series of thought which broadened it out from there, again, .... resulted in just kind of going "I don't feel I can hold this ....." (MC: 2)

I need to know it, what action should I take ... should I get out there, should I get defensive? There's helplessness. ... how do I react ... and not knowing ... it's the helplessness of that sort of a thing .... I'm not expressing it well. That's part of the helplessness. (MC: 5)

When we realise that we have fallen into the chasm between polarities, the question is how to find a new place to have a different conversation, one that will open possibilities for action (Davies & Harré, 1990). We read in the texts for participants' efforts to find such a place. The men's responses to the women's caucus demonstrated a desire to work outside subjugated positions of gender and blame. The language they use enacts the struggle and uncertainty involved in this quest:

And yet it actually felt like we were saying exactly the same thing cos we were talking about empowerment, disempowerment, about how people step into a..... a position and as I'm sitting here listening to the women talk I was kind of drifting in and out of these moments of um ..... personal responsibility.....ah..... role responsibility.... my response to what I was hearing ... and there would be times when I was identifying with ... that kind of feeling helpless.... then it would just ...zip.....evaporate away and I would sit with that and go OK I do not have to have a solution to that, I do not have to fix this problem. ( MC: 7)

and is that part of that... when I think about connection ... is that we all sit with this .. So when we were talking earlier about gender ...when I was listening to this was 'its always about gender' it is always about gender, that is something we all sit with and its not something that necessarily separates us. (MC: 16)

Yeah I understand that but I think it's like when you sit with that, then how does it create that separation ... how does it not allow the conversations that talk about understandings... so it's like. It's not about us ... in a way, it's like how do we have .... I guess even if .....one man is sitting with a woman as a counsellor and its impossible for her to tell stories that are important to be told, then that affects everybody and...I think that if we can have the conversations that make some meaning of that and it sounds like they are really important. (MC: 22)

Isn't that the very thing that unites us though?... cos isn't that not about this 'man' and 'woman' ... isn't that about the gender stories that affect and influence all of us? (MC: 31)

At the moment what I'm seeing is there's almost like there's invitation to take positions ..... and there's some jostling and I'm wondering if its because of the discussions that were had [in the women's caucus] are more emotive than our discussions in some ways...At least with our discussions there was a sense of 'let's get into it' 'let's change the world,' 'let's fix this or let's work with it' ... but the energy that's been left behind with the conversation in the women's caucus it is more emotive and its hard to... there's something there and its shifted the way we are as a group.....(MC:25)

In the men's conversation, they talked about power in its historical context as well as the

personal ramifications of power. They appeared to find it easy to locate themselves within discourses of power while at the same time seeing the power that women held.

The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world (MC:1)

It's important to think about the power and control from men's perspective - about women's power, women's capacity to control (MC: 1.)

Women have a lot of power .... they just do it differently. But also there is power in sex. Sex is a big powerful thing. Distance is a powerful thing (MC: 2)

It is a power and control dynamic and we do it differently don't we? (MC: 5)

Essentialist gender ideas have been shaped historically and culturally and are available to us as 'the ways things are' for men and women in New Zealand. These historical roots are well grounded in colonial and post colonial New Zealand. Ideas that for women have their legacy in the Cult of Domesticity positioned women almost exclusively as mothers and nurturers. Its themes were carried over from Britain as part of migrants' cultural baggage. At the time of colonization women were to be the instruments through which the state could impose domestic order on men and children (James and Saville-Smith, 1989).

Alongside the Cult of Domesticity was a portrayal of appropriate masculinity. For men this came as two opposing roles both of which celebrated qualities of strength, reliability, independence, and ambition. James and Saville-Smith name these two roles as 'The Family Man' and 'The Man Alone'. The Cult of Domesticity implicitly defined the male role as a breadwinner supporting wife and children. This, argue James and Saville-Smith, was the basis for a gendered culture the legacy of which is still available today as 'ways of being men and women'. While we can argue that these ideas are outdated they nevertheless still influence us and the men and women that come to us through DVA programmes (James and Saville-Smith, 1989).

Therefore when the men in the male caucus articulated the power that women wield they were naming the power that has its legacy in women's positions within the Cult of Domesticity where women have held power traditionally - as homemakers and mothers.

Moreover women's alleged moral superiority and status within childrearing and the fact that women were seen as more morally responsible and, of course, more chaste, also created a moral legacy the remnants of which still remain.

.... we are in danger of repeating mistakes if we don't take notice of history and history has told us that in our society we have structures in the past which have disadvantaged some and advantaged others .... We had legislation which gave property rights of one person over another we had legislation which gave sexual rights of one person over another. Even though things have changed the legacy of them still remains and we have an obligation to educate around that as well as working with what is going on for them right now (MC: 7)

So I think if we kind of look at it as that female power is around excluding men from certain parts. I think its a blind alley...I think that addressing male power is about what is it that changes. If we use violence what is it that changes in the nature of our power at that moment? We are both taking something from something else but we are also giving something away at that moment too we are giving away the positions that we might have held and I think that's what Alan Jenkins is talking... about reclaiming those positions around what you know about yourself and operating from that. I don't find that such a hard ask and I think that's the thing with the client ... that we find ways of establishing where their positions are - both the stuff that's working and the stuff that isn't. I get continually exposed to men saying "nobody's going to tell me what to do" And I'm starting to think there's a way of turning that around which is, Ok if you are not going to accept that people can tell you what to do, what are you telling yourself to do at that moment? Why aren't you telling yourself to do something that builds somebody up rather than telling yourself to do something that cuts somebody down? Take responsibility for that and you will have your power back. (MFG: 1).

In order to do DVA work, facilitators inevitably reflect on their own gendered subjectivity. In order to work with other men who have been violent, men facilitators become reflexive about their own masculinity and the multidirectionality of power. We wonder whether women working with women protected persons tend to reflect on their femininity in quite different ways, and in talking about their experiences, access accounts of traditional power over more easily than the complexities of power.

We think that it is important in training and supervision for DVA facilitators, that a place is established that gives facilitators-in-training a clear view of social history and a critical perspective on ideas about gender and violence. We put forward our suggestions for training in the concluding chapter of this report.

## **Flexibility and effective education**

Facilitators describe with enthusiasm the importance of building good connections with clients and the desirability of working alongside to meet client/programme goals of living without violence. Two themes emerged in critique of the current programme requirements, first that the form of the programme and administrative tasks get in the way of the work (or not), and secondly that the programmes focus on individual responsibility and change.

Participants' conversations kept coming back to the topic of the inhibiting effects of the programme requirements. The administrative recording was found to be particularly irritating, and carries the danger of getting in the way of therapeutic engagement:

What we are talking in here about sort of..... we feel constrained by the requirements (FG1: 13)

The paper work is going to be the bit that pushes me out (FG1:)

It's the relationship that has to do with making change in counselling, not anything... I'm saying its absolutely critical and I would be very rude about the changed programme and it's only in this last bit that I've realized that the themes aren't there and this new sheet that's come out has got 'theme' topic - who thinks that this thing is still talking about 'themes' ... for heavens sake.... with themes and a person who can build relationship and some ideas/resources... you can go in there and go where the client needs to go .... and if we are constrained we don't go where the client needs to go....and all we are doing is acting like a little piece of the henchman's axe (FG2: 86)

On the other hand, it is apparent that facilitators with long experience of men's respondent programmes are able to use programme requirements as a tool to achieve the programme goals. Their accounts act as a call for flexibility in making sure that what is done is relevant to the client's situation in the room:

When you do that, how do you maintain the therapeuticness of being with client, when you are methodical about the programme? How is the one connected to the other? Personally I, because I have been working in the structure for x amount of the time, I feel entirely comfortable rearranging it to my client's needs, and I have no problem with that and I say that out in the open (FG1: 47)

I'll talk you through this contract and I am going to talk to you about it in three different ways, one of them is that this is a legal document, because it is stated in there that there is legislation that this relates to, so there is that part of it. The other part of it is that this is a contract between you and me about commitment, and the third one is that this contract starts to describe all the elements of how this work will happen. And I start to go through every single clause. I write up on the white board what it is talking about. So the first one it might be I will attend ... I will write up commitment. The second is if I can't get there I will let you know. Respect. And I go through it like that. And by the time I have got to information sharing, confidentiality, I am talking about

it as the information that you and I need to know about each other, FG1: 19)

The other thing that I think makes it work is that people are flexible with what they do. The first thing is the relationship; the second thing is that you don't do session five as session five is presented. You may say this is about 'Self Esteem', and then you talk and you adapt and respond to the person in the programme, and if we weren't doing that we might as well be in front of a class. (FG1: 63)

In the follow-up conversations, participants reported having conversations with other facilitators about the importance of flexibility in work with clients:

In training new facilitators, I emphasise the importance of flexibility in working through the programme, how to negotiate the agenda with the client, adapt the material, make it meaningful. (R6: 4)

Participants were concerned about the programme focus on the individual as the locus of change rather than family or community. The danger is that the programme mirrors the isolation in which violence thrives:

That's what happens with violence isn't it, the isolation and the lack of support (WFG: 6)

I'm hearing that its not just about working with the other - with the partner or the child its also working the culture - with the bigger level because power is enacted within a relationship isn't it so you can't expect - in some ways - hearing what you've said - for it to be any other way, because you put the person back in relationship - with anything. (FG2: 6)

The overall theme of everybody being an individual trying to find the strength within ... whereas I heard also that would have made it easier if you had support so maybe we need to do it not as individuals more but how can we have community or family... to do it? (MFL: 3)

There is still a relationship [even it is purely as parents] so how do we continue to support that post programme? (FG1: 7)

It takes quite a level of sophistication to go back into a relationship and apply that stuff in a way ..... even if they've done a programme .... they need to be supported. (FG1:3)

Participants expressed concern about the cultural inappropriateness of isolating individuals from their families:

To some extent we have gone full circle - we're still back to talking about how does best practice serve families .....and I think that's the bit... you know how Māori work... and I'm curious to know... how that happens.....brings back into this whole discussion really... it's around ... you know because that's the cultural imperative for them.... that we are not seen as an individual and how we bring that into the context of working around family violence and maintaining the wholeness and the connection of the whanau, hapu, iwi. (FG2: 17)

How do you connect inter personally on a one on one with a person who doesn't consider themselves as an individual because their whole concept of themselves is related to the group and it's not so much an emotional connection but a functional connection to the group... I can provide, I can save face... I can do this... that's what I am. And so how do you do that? And it means our whole Western style of counselling is so disrespectful ... because it is based on the premise of individual responsibility and "I am" yes... which is an alien concept because if you have never been raised as an individual in any way shape or form...that includes Pacific Island too ...(FG2: 130)

There is not even a word for "I" in many collective cultures.... (FG2: 16)

Our Māori consultants in Study Three, which is explicated later in this report, powerfully take up these concerns about programmes reproducing individualism.

A way through the disadvantages of people doing programmes as individuals separated from their families is to set up community initiatives to support clients post programme:

Yes so ideally it would be lovely to have after you've done the little bits around safety and motivation, getting the couple and the family the support networks, the extended family the informal support networks, the formal support networks working together to help shift and make the landscape more conducive to the changes they want to make - for me that would be the ideal. (FG2: 6)

I think that is the issue that it actually needs long term support, it needs community support, that these things don't go away after twelve sessions and I think the value for us in our community of having a domestic violence network, work and for clients to support ongoing change. (WC: 56)

Throughout the texts we studied, participants want to discuss the restrictions of the current programme regulations. While there is no doubt that facilitators learn to work the programme flexibly in order to catch the 'teachable moments' in clients' stories of their experiences, we wonder whether there is not a way to structure programmes so that programme structure and requirements do not get in the way of learning.

### **Empathy and engagement**

The regulations for DVA programmes insist that DVA programmes are education not therapy. This dichotomy was set up in 1996 and is reproduced through the Ministry of Justice regulations and audits. It is an unfortunate polarisation of two interrelated ways of talking about violence prevention:

I would be interested in that tension between psycho-educational and therapeutic because I don't believe it needs to be there because I believe that something that is a good therapeutic programme

is definitely educational and so I don't see why we keep getting this - even though there are 12 sessions it doesn't mean that they can't be therapeutic, .....- and there is nothing wrong with educational it just means I don't have to dump this piece of knowledge on you there. I can't see that that is educational myself. Education can never happen without a relationship either .... (FG2:91)

There's research that the government has just done about effective teachers and all that has just come out....and it came out that the most effective teachers aren't the ones with degrees and qualifications, it's the ones that engage with the students and care for them, and are interested and curious... it's exactly the same thing...(FG2:223)

As Cagney (2009) reminds us, in the twenty years since programmes have been introduced many changes have been made in therapeutic approaches, so much so that Cagney suggests that *therapy* has in effect, caught up with the challenge of *education*. Therefore we need now to be thinking about how we do education *and* therapy. The literature is very clear about the need for therapeutic engagement (Day, Chung, Leary, & Carson, 2009). Chovanec (2009) and Jenkins (2009) both stress the importance of validating client experience. They emphasized the need to 'care' about the clients in doing this type of work. Latta (2003) emphasises that it is compassion that builds the connection. The texts argue powerfully for the importance of establishing a good connection with clients in order to work together:

The empathy, the connection, it was present at the beginning, it was present before the DV Act came into being (FG1: 9)

It's really interesting; we have a facilitator who is Samoan who has been doing the work for about eight years. "We have just had this massive Ministry of Justice audit, and he very tentatively confessed he takes about three sessions to engage and sometimes he hasn't signed the contract though until then. And he says "I don't do all that paperwork, I will, but I want to establish a relationship first. And if he comes back for the third time he's there for the distance. And then I will get him to do the paperwork." (FG1: 46)

There was agreement that to deliver a programme effectively, it needs to be adapted to the needs of the client even in the detail of the vocabulary used:

You don't know their metaphor, you don't know the words they are going to use ... so our process is just enquiry, finding out what they call it and sometimes it takes half an hour or an hour to find out what they would call (FG2: 24)

A frequently used idea is that of working "alongside" the client, as a way of expressing the collaboration that enables effective work with clients:

So I remember our first training in Hamilton that we had that I was talking about the other day and the woman who was taking it was for better or worse stepping into DVA work, Gaye Sutton, and she talked about “us women”, and that was huge for me, and I try to say oh “us women” do take responsibility for things, don’t we, you know it’s like to position her alongside me, and I am no different. (WFG: 21)

Peter Swain said..... years ago.... “One man’s violence is a message to all women and affects all men” so part of my growth I suppose is how the people with me change and grow as well...I guess that is why I’m doing it and even how my relationship and my relationship with my kids changes almost as other men’s relationship with their kids change... that’s it, that’s the bit I suppose, yeah. (MFG: 3).

We as women workers are part of the same social fabric as the women we meet with. It is not us versus them. We are sisterhood. (WFG: 1)

We might wonder whether clients would find the idea of being “alongside” an accurate description of their experience. In the reflections phase of the research, there was more critical reflection on the importance of “relationship” that was so much spoken of in the focus groups:

The therapeutic relationship seems to be real, but it is in some ways superficial. We are not engaging in a close relationship but in a therapeutic relationship. Non-alignment is inherent in the way that we are engaging with but not relating to the person. It is a one-way relationship for a reason, it is not a friendship. ...This “alongside” process - how much it is not alongside. We use tools and strategies without it affecting us. We know how to manage distance and ask or clients to engage more of themselves than we do. (R6: 3)

Many of the participants were familiar with the therapeutic work of Australian Alan Jenkins (2009) who talks about his work with men who use violence as ‘the politics of intervention,’ the main tenet of which is ‘invitational practice’ which he argues needs to be underlaid by the principles of practice - safety, responsibility, accountability, respect, and fairness. Jenkins’ ideas were often taken up by participants and used to explore the connection between facilitator and client, for example the complexity of connection without collusion:

and how do you attend to that in a room with the guy ... part of you is saying, actually I somehow agree with you to a certain extent about something but that doesn’t take away from what you did and that we need to do some work about what you’ve done and how you’ve gone about doing it but there’s also a part that’s tempted to collude to some extent and that’s the part that cares. (MFG: 40)

Disconnection and connection were also spoken of as a way of describing client situations and goals. Connection is important to clients in their lives:

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For me it's about connection with that position stated cos we've talked a lot about connection and for me it is about connection, its about connection with um ... their connection with place, with people with beliefs and ideas and with a preferred sense of being and starting from that place of acknowledging the difference in position and then from there going to connection. (MFG: 13)

Yeah you know we make connections between what you've done and where you want to be ... we make connections internally with people and we make connections externally with people that's what our role is we connect people with possibilities with different ways of being or connection the pain and resolving that connection with shame and guilt. (FG2: 14)

In the work with respondents, a breakthrough to a collaborative relationship with clients might be through focusing on their children, and sharing concern about their wellbeing and the possibility of improving parenting:

A lot of these men have been raised in violent families themselves....a lot of men have had experiences about knowing what its like as children to have to be aware of other peoples entitlements and so starting to shift them away from that self regard into the - you know the children is a nice way to do that - extended empathy and I'm working on that.... (FG1: 3)

During the men's focus group there was talk of personal journeys and how they came to stand in their own preferred territories of identity as men. For example:

For me it's representing some alternate views for men, for me, part of the influence of getting into the work was ... the feminist movement was very strong and I consider myself pro feminist - you know, I have daughters and a partner and I want what's best for them and a society that accommodates that. There was a stream of wanting to find a model or a way of being that meant that I could function in a way that I felt good with because I had known what it was like to live in an environment where you felt totally disempowered so there was that stream and then there was the other stream of having known what it was like ... then that translated into social justice and all the kinds of things that were going on for me in the 70s and to supporting pro feminist ideas and principles in practical ways and taking up the challenge around promoting another way that men could be and so those kind of two streams met really (MC: 28).

Facilitators discussed the balance needed to be able to hold a relationship while at the same time being able to provide information to challenge men in the change process, for example material on social hierarchy, power and control, and kinds of abuse.

I think that's the essence our work - the relationship we build with the person, how we do that in a respectful way even though there are boundaries and power and expectations and all that if we can hold ourselves in place, and then we are modelling something (MFG: 90).

Some of those men I've worked with are actually really noble in a certain extent I mean they've done some dumb things ... they have grown up in some violent environments where they made a stand "I never want to be like that" "I never want to hurt anyone like that" but they have never been taught how to do anything different so they have just withdrawn and so there's this disparity in the ... you know and they get polarized and because this withdrawal's not working

for them they are still human and they've still got all these things and they don't know how to do it any other way other than what they have been modeled in the past they will slip back.. revert to that (MFG: 53).

The texts tell us that experienced facilitators understand the importance of establishing some sort of platform from which the work in programmes can begin. The texts also show us that the articulation of what this platform might be called is complicated. The complexities thrown up by dichotomies of education/therapy, victim/perpetrator, fault/blame have to be worked around. It appears that the creative ways facilitators learn to deal with these complexities are borne out of years of experience in DV programme facilitation alongside of finding their own preferred territories of identity as men and women.

### **The impact of the work**

From the first stages of this project, we have been interested in participants' accounts of the impact of facilitating DVA programmes on their sense of professional/personal wellbeing. We have known practitioners who have withdrawn from domestic violence work because of the troubling effects on them emotionally and others have withdrawn because they have lost belief in the efficacy of their efforts. The texts speak of emotional effects, loss of hope, the danger involved. They also speak of how hope is sustained.

A range of unpleasant emotional effects were described including fear, anger, frustration, shock, and anxiety.

I have got this knot in my stomach because what I am recognizing is my own anger (WFG: 19)

And I had tears in my eyes when (she) was telling the story, and I think, my God, how many times in twenty years am I going to keep crying about women. (WFG: 19b)

I was thinking about the sitting with fear and how important it is that while we empathise, we don't get afraid. Because it doesn't help anybody if we both get afraid. (WFG: 7)

There are times when clients are in dangerous situations, and facilitators feel responsibility for their client's safety. The guidelines for DVA programmes and RSW policies are very clear and include procedures for assessing risk, for taking steps to

minimize danger and for appropriate notifications, and there are supports available at any stage. For facilitators, however, there is constant watchfulness for the safety of all involved, the client and the client's family and for facilitator colleagues:

It was that thing of how those stories get heard in a way that does not put the woman further at risk? But it doesn't just stay with the woman and her responsibility? And our responsibility working with her. (WFG: 2)

What if I was wrong, what will the Coroner say? So I think we do walk along the edge of the cliff, and we don't know when it will fall away, really. (WFG: 7)

This is dangerous stuff that we do. (WFG: 1)

There is also the effect of hearing about client's trauma and fear, which over time has effects we may not be aware of at the time:

Vicarious trauma can be subtly present before we realise. That ability that we have to sort of "I am shocked" but to not visibly convey the shock, but to actually then express that it isn't okay. How to sit with sometimes really vile stuff that we hear and internally we are falling apart. (WFG: 7)

Have we got so sensitised to this, are we so in tune that actually we not only hear the incident but we also hear the meaning behind it and everything else that has gone with it and go 'ah my God!' (WFG: 4)

The texts of the focus group conversations and later recorded reflections also speak of what motivates facilitators to work in this specialised field. A range of positive effects are cited, including the sense of making a contribution, of the satisfaction of doing work that is congruent with one's values and beliefs, and receiving client feedback both at the time and later on.

Facilitators enjoy being involved with people who are focused on changing the way they live, on disentangling how violence has occurred and developing strategies for relating more peacefully. This sounds to us like the position of collaborator as described by Holly Bell (2003), who argues that attending to client strengths in domestic violence interventions lessens the likelihood of secondary trauma.

When I can shift around what violence is about, and shift it around in couples, shift it around a programme, shift it around in my family, shift it around in me, whatever to this is someone who wants a little bit more, or they are grieving, or they are not getting their need met. That's good for everyone, its good for the programme; it is good for community, (FG1: 16)

The sense of making a contribution to the community is one of the sources of meaning

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people experience in their lives (O'Connor & Chamberlain, 1996). There are satisfactions in working with people towards constructive change and in contributing towards a more peaceful community and society:

There's an old story about someone walking along the beach, throwing starfish into the sea and someone watching him and saying, "how come you are doing that because as you look out you can see a trillion starfish on the beach, you are not going to save them all. "Look at that one. That one is saved." That's the family, that's the hope story I carry. And that's not just a number of people, that's about the interpersonal, and all the different parts that are in us that go towards health. So its another part of me that is healthy, and that's the man in front of me, the child, the couple, I hold hope for each one that I think hasn't made a change, I expect change to happen. (FG1: 11)

The sense of making a useful contribution is strengthened by positive feedback from clients and their families:

I agree that something that gives hope is having feedback. Feedback from people that you have worked with. (FG1: 12)

We talked a bit about it and she asked me and "I said some people say sometimes the programmes are effective and sometimes they are not" and she said "I don't care who they are effective for, they worked for us and that's all that matters." and so I think those are the hooks that keep me working and also the advantages of a small community because hope is often kept alive because you see people and run into people and people remember. (FG1: 14)

The practice of regular DV supervision for facilitators is an effective means of sustaining hope:

I hold hope through supervision, both specialised DVA, external and internal individual supervision. Also in noticing positive change towards a non-abusive, non-violent lifestyle with the respondent. (R: 6)

In our domestic violence supervision we were able to talk about our vulnerability and fear and build strong sharing with other facilitators (R: 6b)

I am pragmatic and have invested a lot of myself in this work. I accidentally came into the work and what has kept me in it is my vision of the world. Sometimes we get afraid to promote that vision because it leaves us vulnerable. When you share your beliefs and hopes it makes you vulnerable. (R: 2)

Supervision is an important venue for sharing the achievements in and difficulties of the work and for storying professional identity (Crocket, 2007).

In summary, it is clear that facilitating domestic violence programmes brings facilitators into close contact with trauma and accompanying negative emotional effects.

Supervision is a means of limiting the negative effects and building hope. The sense of collaborating with people to change their behaviours and the sense of making a contribution to a more peaceful society brings a sense of achievement and satisfaction. We suggest that facilitator training emphasises the importance of supervision as a means of monitoring facilitator wellbeing professionally and personally.

### **Summary of Study One**

The focus group and caucus conversations show that facilitating DVA programmes is complex. The site where gender and power meets is fraught with issues for the men and women who participate in programmes and the facilitators who work with them. The conversations show that participants appreciate the complexity of violence and its generation in societal attitudes and behaviours, and at the same time that it tests facilitator's beliefs about the nature of violence and the dichotomy of victim and perpetrator. Questions of gender became difficult and at times painful, with polarizations between male and female in talking about their own and clients' experiences. Participants were clear that the dichotomy of therapy and education is unhelpful and does not recognize best practice. There was agreement that empathy and engagement are crucial factors in effective programmes. The work of a facilitator is difficult, complex, and draining; yet despite all this, these facilitators continue to work in this arena. The implications of these findings for facilitator training and the future development of programmes are discussed in our conclusion.

## V

### STUDY TWO: CLIENT VOICES

#### Results

When we categorised Questions 1 and 3 on the client evaluation forms, a clear picture emerged. There were strong similarities between the preferences of men and women respondents, and a different set of appreciations from the protected women. Table 1 gives a full list of responses allocated to categories:

Table 1: Programme participants' evaluations of programme effectiveness

	Protected women	Respondent women	Respondent men
<b>Question 1: Usefulness</b>			
Understanding emotions	16	11	112
Strategies violence/anger	38	36	293
Therapeutic relationship	33	6	84
Listened to	61	8	193
Communication skills	20	8	50
Healing past	8	1	46
Improved relationships	28	7	144
Self responsibility	52	12	153
Commitment to violence-free life	14	7	46
<b>Question 2: Effectiveness</b>			
Understanding emotions	11	8	91
Strategies violence/anger	34	36	275
Therapeutic relationship	37	5	146
Listened to	24	6	82
Communication skills	14	5	69
Healing past	9	1	39
Improved relationships	22	9	124
Self responsibility	40	9	108
Commitment to violence-free life	11	6	41
Total forms	174	66	761

There were some interesting specifics in the responses, notably the usefulness and memorability of DVDs, the information that was provided about protection orders, especially for protected persons, the friendly welcome by reception staff and the usefulness of whiteboard teaching. Cultural appropriateness was also mentioned

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positively by ten respondent men, two respondent women, and one protected person and negatively by one respondent man. In all these cases, the programme facilitator was pakeha. The ethnicity of clients is not recorded on evaluation forms.

The graphs presented below compare client evaluations on the two questions analysed: Question 1: What did you find most useful about the programme? And Question 3: What is the thing you remember most from the programme?

Figure 1: Male respondent programme evaluations

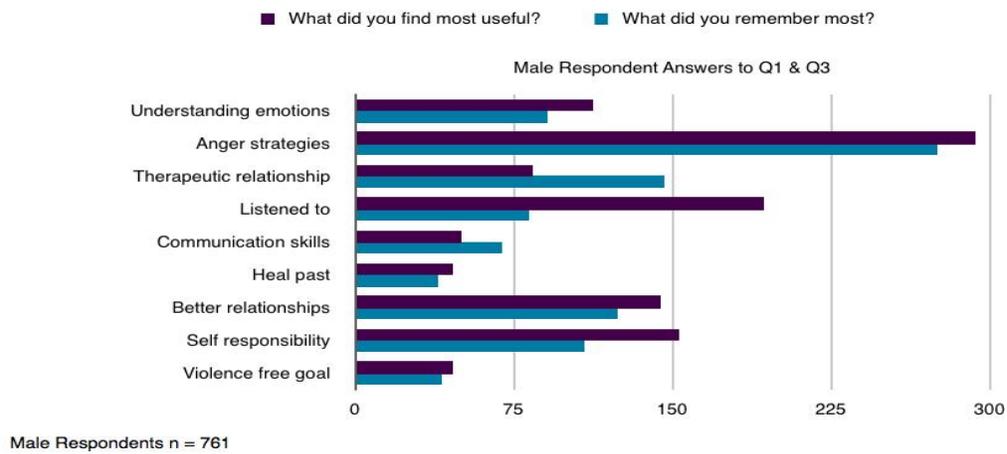


Figure 2: Female respondent programme evaluations

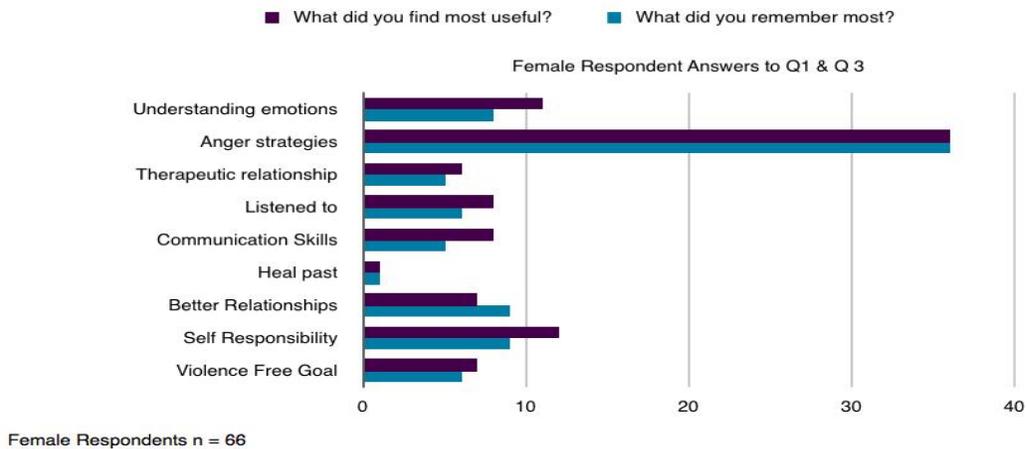
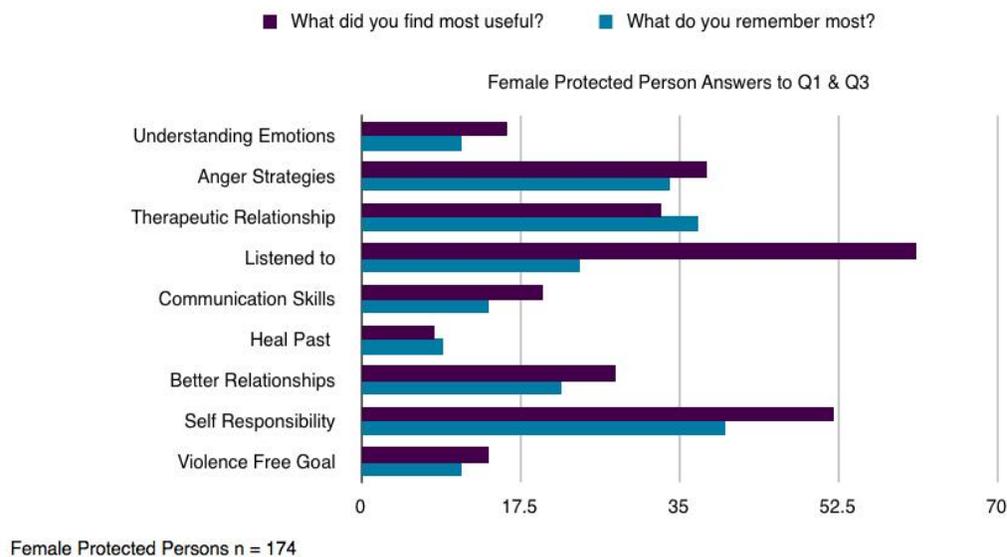


Figure 3: Female protected person programme evaluations



## Discussion

A comparison of the graphs indicate that the key difference in responses is a function of whether the programme is a respondent programme or a protected persons' programme, and is not a function of sex of client. Respondent clients of both sexes rate most highly strategies for managing emotions, and female protected persons rate most highly being listened to, and the development of self-responsibility.

These findings are congruent with programme objectives. It interests us that the responses of respondent clients affirm the importance of educational goals for avoiding violence and managing emotions as the primary goals. The responses of protected women suggest that programmes for protected persons share therapeutic and educational outcomes, being listened to and developing self-responsibility. These evaluations affirm that all three programmes are working effectively to meet desired outcomes of living safely without violence.

We caution readers of this report that these discoveries are tentative, given the limitations of the evaluation forms. It is not possible to be sure whether the client is male or female or what programme they have completed, unless, as in some cases, these details were added later. Nor has it been possible to reach conclusions about which strategies clients found useful. The items on the forms are general, not specific. We were unable to categorise questions two and four because the clients' responses were so disparate.

We strongly suggest that programme evaluation forms be revised to specify the sex and cultural affiliation of each client, and which programme was completed. We also suggest that items be redesigned so that questions are asked which invite specific responses, for example to describe useful exercises and which strategies and information now inform new behaviours.

We found it informative to read the above results alongside the gender differences identified in the focus group texts. Many of the women participants facilitate only women's protected persons programmes. The women who took up more critical and reflective positions around gender have experience in respondent programmes for women and men. We wonder whether Relationship Services Whakawhangaunga might consider that involvement in men's and women's respondent programmes might be effective in ongoing training for those who facilitate women's protected person programmes. We discuss ideas for future facilitator training in the final chapter of this project.

## VI

### STUDY THREE: MĀORI VOICES

*Māori cultural practices and values have been devalued, marginalised and abnormalised. In the case of Māori therapeutic models and paradigms, the response to whanau violence latterly has been the selected use of isolated tikanga/cultural constructs. However, Māori practitioners have been trying for the past twenty years to have their practices validated. The validity of Western practices is never challenged and the validity of indigenous models is never fully achieved. The selective use of particular Māori constructs indicates that at one level, culture and cultural values are seen as important to the process of constructing interventions for whanau violence. However, the use of selective constructs sits within a non- Māori paradigm and practice model that has validity. Māori cultural constructs are used to “window dress” a model that is never challenged in terms of its relevance and application to Māori. (Kruger et al., 2004 p. 29-30)*

#### **Results and discussion**

The consultation with Māori RSW staff gave us strong messages about the necessary conditions for culturally appropriate and therefore effective practice with Māori clients.

We were not comfortable with our own position in relation to the texts we were reading. In the same way as we were welcomed into the marae and listened through our pakeha ears, we then read and interpreted the words that were spoken in that place through our pakeha eyes and minds. We wondered even as we wrote what remains inaudible and invisible. We have endeavoured to step aside and let Māori voices be heard by reading the transcripts alongside the Second Māori Taskforce on Whanau Violence (Kruger et al. 2004) and by including a wide range of quotations from participants in this presentation of the analysis.

Our analysis of the transcripts led to five themes:

The limitations of current programmes for Māori

Re-visioning the programme

The person of the facilitator

Questions of identity

Questions of gender

### **Limitations of current programmes for Māori**

The message the Māori consultants gave to the research is very clear: as they stand, the Ministry of Justice guidelines for DVA programmes do not meet the needs of Māori, and are deficient both in content and in context:

There is a lack of provision around programmes that are Māori in their content and context. (M: 15)

It's not tailored to them (M: 47)

....more for us as Māori facilitators to be considering these things in terms of the hikoi that's before us in which ever direction we might be going - if it's to stay here and invest in this piece of work and fight for our wananga to have the very best in a mainstream organization that they possibly can have, or to return to their own people. It's equally important for RSW to ensure Māori begin to have the things that Māori need to meet the needs of Māori as it is for Māori to have the voice to say this is what we need and for it to be heard. (M: 136)

The Taskforce (2004) warned, "if whanau violence interventions continue to be delivered from a pakeha conceptual and practice framework that isolates, criminalizes and pathologises Māori individuals, nothing will change" (p.4).

Our consultants emphasised that culturally appropriate programmes would be delivered to whanau rather than limited to individuals:

I want to advocate for whanau, hapu, iwi capacity but really saying that when you are working with a person your impact on a whanau is limited so when we are working with the whanau then the sustainability of the mahi is more likely to occur because everyone in that whanau is part of that growth and that development. (M: 2)

Part of the programme that we put together is about whanau and we were told that at this point in time there was no space for whanau to be seen in a domestic violence programme and for us Māori the things that would be taken into consideration prior to that thing happening is the work that had been done so that there would be a wider whanau and the safety of that would have been done - it would have been done in the whare but there is no ability to be able to do that under the Ministry of Justice current guidelines. (M: 3)

The irony is that for a programme to be approved, it is required to incorporate tikanga, which forces a strange division between tikanga and whanaungatanga:

The way it is written currently it says that in writing a Māori programme ..... tikanga ... has to be taken into consideration, however the wananga process is not taken into consideration (M: 3b)

What they are saying might be their idea of reality but the family reality is just as important. And I have to say I do wish that there was a way that we could actually work more with whanau. (M:8)

As the Taskforce on Whanau Violence points out, the selective use and interpretation of particular Māori cultural constructs is at one level a recognition of the importance of culture and cultural values in DVA programmes, but that situated in a non-Māori paradigm and practice, they serve only as window dressing for a Western model. In order for a Māori respondent to be violence free and achieve the goals of the programme, the whanau rather than the individual needs to be the focus:

So it seems like there is no recognition of the value that could be there of the healing of whanau or the individual within that whanau because the whanau is the one that...there's a lot in whanau.....because whanau is the one that ... where the healing is done, and that is not recognized. .... I think we have an opportunity because we have a gathering of people who can really inform and hold on to bits and pieces because there is really no one person who can hold the person - it takes the whanau to hold it (M: 9a).

The Taskforce labelled the current systemic response to whanau violence as the “naughty system.”

The naughty system is characterized by a punitive approach to the perpetrator and the isolation of the victim within a system that punishes and reduces violence to criminal and deviant behaviour. The pathologising of whanau violence renders the individual perpetrator as ‘pathological’ without taking into account the context in which whanau violence is create and sustained. Pathology is anti whakapapa because it reduces the individual entity divorced from the collective responsibilities and mutual obligations that are attached to functional whakapapa. The Taskforce is of the view that a system that focuses on ‘individual pathology’ will produce models that are oriented towards individual ‘victim blaming’ treatments and ‘removal of the offending individual’ from the whanau, hapu, iwi and cultural context in which whanau violence occurs. It is

within this context that there is the potential for establishing constructive solutions and positive healing practices. (p. 13)

This explication is consistent with the messages our consultants gave us. Western individualism is inherent in the justice system in Aotearoa New Zealand and is inconsistent with Māori world view on what it is to be a person, and how justice is best achieved.

### **Re-visioning the programme**

The inconsistency of Western and Māori world views was appreciated by our consultants, who experience it every day. The hui conversations questioned the DVA legislation and Ministry of Justice regulations:

They are restraints that are placed on us by MOJ. So it would seem that currently the whole set up, the way the law is written by Government, the Crown, does not have space for Māori to interact with Māori in a way in which is valued by our people and supports the tikanga of the ropu (M: 3).

I think an assumption I would make given that I have kind of worked around that legislation for the years I did, was that we weren't even considered. (M: 5)

In practice, some of our consultants have found ways to work around the programme to disrupt the individualism of programmes, through sharing of information across programmes, or by accessing other funding streams. Facilitators take risks to develop counter-practices in order to ensure quality programme delivery:

Yes some of that goes on in our office where the DV facilitator will have conversations with the client about whether - you know - whether they want their partner or... maybe its the usefulness of having your partner having some information and support as well... so the partner is encouraged to come in and see somebody else and do um the other programme - the applicants' programme... and then there is some collaborative stuff around getting agreement from them to support the wider and ongoing stuff.. as well and within RSW we have the ability to do that because we can tap into funding so that the other persons don't have to pay - CYF funding or the Family Court ... it's not straight forward - it's a collaborative thing, but it's definitely creative (M: 24)

.... I work with the woman and that's only as a respondent and I will tailor the programme to the woman - exactly and I mean it could be around communications, boundaries, and all of that sort of thing, those are the most important things around parenting that I have found have been really quite important and beneficial and I will review that, talk about that and whatever they bring in each day. What I do at the end of the programme towards the end of the programme is I leave a

space in that for them to bring in their partner and so that's, that's open and what I do is that I usually sit down and let the partner and that talk about what he's seeing - about the changes that he's seeing, and so how has that been for him and his children and for her too as well (M: 36)

Client evaluation forms which have been analysed in Study Two of this research project and the conversations analysed in Study One emphasise the importance of the relationship with the facilitator, not being pressured and being listened to without judgment. In order to collaborate with Māori clients in these ways, facilitators need to understand Māori ways of being:

I think that when they fill out the evaluation sheet one of things they put down is that the environment was safe, it was fun it - they didn't feel pressured, so those things definitely, and that they did all the talking and I did the listening and that yes our homework has to be done but if we don't do it we are not told off. We do it then. So I think it's those things come out really quite clearly. And some of them - we might sit and have a waiata and I'll say - leave that over there today I am going to teach you something that I learnt at poi or something like that and we will sit and have a waiata ... so yeah - so I do that. Or else I say, look I'm really lazy today I am going to sit here and say nothing - you take the session. And of course the session is the handout that they have and - they do all their own writing on the forms and sign it so as far as being organized around the paper work that has to happen I am pretty spot on about that. Because I think it goes hand in hand with the --- well you need to do this and I need to do that. And they see it all too. (M: 51)

The people that I work with are disconnected in many many ways, so what I do is that I ask for the behind scenes... so who is an aunty, who is an uncle, just like as I said and I will always ask 'so who is the whanau and that around you?' and so be able to have that connection for them back into that and will talk with them about that and sometimes I would encourage them, bring them in so that we can have this discussion and then maybe take that ... (M: 71)

Our programmes need to have ... or our facilitators need to have the breadth of vision to be able to say, 'that young person or that person is actually blah blah blah' because that's what we do we try to work out who you are in relation to me and me vice versa. I need to be talking to .. somebody..... you know. (M: 135)

Māori programme facilitators are positioned in the tension between the regulations and what they know to be best practice for Māori. This position is risky, isolating, and operates outside the safety of programme guidelines. It is also insufficient. Māori ways of working would hold any programme in a wider context of whanau and also a longer context of time. This group spoke strongly about the need for community follow-up on the completion of a DVA programme, a theme that was also evident in the focus group conversations in Study One:

I'm also thinking, is there a way that we can link the people who get referred to us and don't have a choice back also to their hapu, iwi if they are in their rohe is that part of possibly, the creativity that we might explore? To give them a sense of connection. Cos we are just one stop in the journey. You know, we are not the journey. We are a dot in their lives really, but to get to the next significant dot is there something there about making that.... you know, helping them or supporting them to move towards that - back to their own kind, because its not an either/or experience for our people, you know, we can have it all, and we do. We get the clinical stuff, we get the stuff around our own - we don't have to choose one or the other. As many people in this country don't have... we can have it all. (M: 106)

What I think one of the things I would like to see in terms of the DV programme is maybe an external assessment ... it would be good to kind of have some external agency looking at our programmes for the benefit of providing us with another viewpoint especially when we are talking about - and I am particularly referring to Māori when they come onto our programmes - no matter what they are and whether or not - looking at the different facilitators who are working with our people - with Māori. The level of Māori influence in the programme or not - you know there are quite a few questions around that stuff. And the idea is to really make use of that kind of external review in order to maybe enhance the programmes. (M: 116)

The call for ongoing support for people who complete programmes echoes the importance of community support that was talked about in the focus group conversations in Study One.

### **The person of the facilitator**

The conversation with Māori discussed how important the facilitator is to the success of the programme. An effective facilitator of programmes for Māori will work within Māori world view:

The programmes only work because of the personality of the person who is presenting you know, and what they bring to it, they change it around they make it theirs because they have to give them, they put themselves on the line they say I can make this stand. This is how I did it. (M: 9)

And in the first session there was a resistance to me until we did our whakawhanaungatanga and he found out who I was and then it changed everything. (M: 10a)

So my concern would be that if I wasn't his Kaitautoko [Māori term for facilitator] and he was seen by a pakeha counsellor male or female and they were not able to do that then what value could that programme be to him? And whilst I know that what is written in our programme is what has been approved by MOJ but for us as facilitators there is the creativity to be able to deliver how we want to but just as [another group member] said, it's down to the facilitator and what they bring to the work, and so if my whanaunga had been seen by a tauwi counsellor how much success could they have had with the initial connection? and also his resistance to coming into this piece of work and how skilled could a pakeha worker be in bringing Te Ao Māori to that client? So I think that in itself is an issue, it's something that needs to be given consideration to - as to who works with our people. (M: 10B)

The question arose as to whether the client can choose their facilitator. Ideally there would be Māori facilitators available to work with Māori clients:

11. I think that one of the most important things is, but I know its not always possible in a group, is to ask the person - the client, who they can work with best. What they want who do they want... do they want Māori, do they want pakeha, do they want Chinese? I don't know because I know lots of really good pakeha facilitators who do a whole lot better work than I can with Māori people and that's about I guess making connections at a gut level maybe so yeah I hope not to blanket.....
12. I have a slightly different viewpoint on that ... at the end I would like to think I had a choice about who I was to see...
13. That's exactly right, that's my point....
14. ... But as a Māori I think I am entitled first off to see a Māori practitioner... I mean it doesn't always work like that obviously - in some places there's not a lot of them on the ground ... but I think that for whanau who come in the door and in especially in an area like Kaitaia where we've got a population that is predominately Māori I think most of them would expect ... to see... and I think they are entitled.... I guess it's that thing about what's normal.

The Taskforce on Whanau Violence emphasised the required knowledges and skills of a facilitator of DVA programmes for Māori. These requirements include belief in the validity of whakapapa (p. 18), to be exemplars of tikanga (p. 21), be competent and conversant in the recognition of wairua states and the transformative outcomes of healing the wairua first (p. 23), to be competent and conversant in the recognition of tapu (p. 25), of mauri (p. 26) and of mana and its application to guide practice (p. 28). These requirements are consistent with the kaupapa of our consultation.

In the current situation, Māori practitioners have to work the programme flexibly in order to provide interventions that are not only culturally appropriate but also which are transformative for clients. Such flexibility requires working in the margins of the Ministry of Justice guidelines. We are concerned that despite the recommendations of taskforces since the Act was made law in 1996, Māori facilitators are not held by a community of support, but risk isolation and criticism for taking a stand for best practice in working with Māori clients.

## Questions of identity

We were fortunate to be presented with an example of a Tikanga programme for Māori. Hakopa Paora gave a presentation of the Ngati Pikiaio –RSW partnered programme he is working on. This initiative is evidence of the Taskforce on Whanau Violence (2004) statement that “Māori practitioners have been seeking the right and space to develop their own practice models for the prevention of whanau violence without having their practices mutated by legislation, policy, funding or a foreign paradigm and pedagogy” (p. 4).

So that’s an overview of where we want to go with the programme. We have a framework we have guiding concepts and principles, what we will do is just talk some more around how we fit around some of the things that we have to answer to the MOJ for. (M: 100)

So what I saw presented by Hakopa – it’s like yes I get that. I don’t have to jig it around in my head, it is innate, how they have used their story about their canoe - that makes sense but at a much more, - at a very intimate - you know it’s right in my puku - I don’t have to go down splitting men and women or all that cos there is something about that is that resonates in this part of me - the physical part of me (M: 69).

A central characteristic of a culturally appropriate programme is located in Māori identity:

The richness in that korero (Hakopa’s presentation) is - for me its like music for the soul and the heart because its located in identity as opposed what mainstream programmes are where they are located in change and kind of change of behaviour, because for me our world is our world because we have our own ways, our own infrastructure, our own tikanga, our own ways of being to heal ourselves. (M: 103)

For me, just listening to your korero, Hakopa, and I can remember whanau of mine going through Te Arawa and I can remember them coming home and talking about who they were and about starting there. It’s really beautiful for me to see that that korero has held true. (M: 106)

... it’s actually not so much what we are doing ... although that’s important because we need to undo some of that stuff, but its about who we are and who we are becoming and that’s really important in those rich conversations. (M: 125)

They bring men, I think they are just out of prison or they are on DV programmes anyway they get a group of these people who are all from the north they all whakapapa these tane from the north and they come to this wananga to learn about waka and actually get into waka . .... what I saw was this transformation ... and they would talk about whanau and they would talk about hapu they weren’t talking about violence, they weren’t talking about all the stuff - they know what violence looks like, they know what all the stuff looks like (M132) ....they were talking about the stuff they didn’t have in their lives. The stuff that nurtured them (M 133a)...And so that’s for me - where I see the difference where we have this programme A and the Ngati Pikiaio programme - the potential is quite different (M133b)..... the wananga carried on, and these men transformed, just transformed..... yes and this was a small sector of a hard core group who hadn’t had that privileged opportunity to be in a safe space, in a haven like this.... you know ...

and then to be able to actually do one of our, ...a haka from the north and then to be able to get a waka to just glide on the water, that was just a ..... I don't think people will forget that experience - those who were in that wananga. So I feel like, this is what ... when I'm thinking about what is it what is it for our ... for people that come through our doors..... somehow that's what I see... yeah... and it might be ..... they might do a bit of mahi with us but where's the bit that takes them to the other... so that their waka can really glide on the water..... and it might be over there..... it might be in ..... in the wananga there....(M: 133c)

I guess that's what's sitting with me is that we are a people who are in a process of reclaiming our ... our selves our world our world view... of taking it back. And in order to do that the tension is to return home and work with your own or not but then there is the reality of, we are a people who are in the process of reclaiming our own ways of being and our own ways of doing things. (M: 136a)

This emphasis on “flows of becoming” (Jenkins, 2009) echoes the practitioner’s quotation in the Task Force Report (2004, p. 22) “You have to bring the wairua and life force back into their bodies and then they begin to address the pain that they are in and look at other issues but you have to bring them back to them.”

## Questions of gender

The participants in Study One who were mainly pakeha, regarded gender as a crucial issue in violence. From a Māori perspective, gender becomes much less relevant:

I'm actually holding myself back from that sort of stuff [gender analysis] because when I get captured with that for example, I go down a totally different path. I go down a very critical analytical path, which is actually, its miles away from this - which is what I want to hold. (M: 119)

When I was doing preparation for the male respondent programme one of the questions was around the feminist model and all through training - I don't know how many of you are familiar with this, we had this thing about the feminist model and so it 's like Ok I know that that exists but its a thing whereas for me it might be one of the elements which sits inside my world view which is about being Māori. And so that's just an element when I'm talking to guys or talking to women about items of gender stuff but for them it's just an element for them the bigger picture is .... What's hau ora because that's really what they are put into to - what's the whanau like its not really well he did that because of male privilege or whatever. (M: 122)

I find it interesting that when we talk about ... when we look at the programme ...even in the authorization forms and things like that, there are questions about gender and ideas that you've got and things like that and the real differences and how those differences can be like that. And yet in Te Ao Māori according to whakapapa we have our roles and responsibilities as well but the roles and responsibilities don't do this. We are the same of old. In the time of our tipuna they [men and women] were the same, the mana was the same for the both but there were different roles and different responsibilities and whakapapa determined what those things were. But in Te Ao Hurihuri we have a set of principles that almost acknowledge the roles but its like this so we talk about patriarchy - it's like this - they're different sets of roles - she goes home does the cooking

does this does this and the next thing and he's the boss. Those things happen in Te au Māori as well - there's those roles, but you know, our tipuna didn't have it like that -there wasn't those..... whakapapa determined that the mana of both people were held the same. (M: 126)

The Taskforce on Whanau Violence (2004) argues that Western feminism is a white cultural construct, which comes from the same white cultural powerbase as colonization and cultural imperialism. Strict gender arguments render cultural oppression and racism as invisible. Our consultants would agree. For them, gender is a less important identity claim than being Māori:

I think one of the critical things is that we are challenged by world views. Our world view is .... a good example of that is what Hakopa has just presented on what Ngati Pikiako intend, are wanting to do with their programmes. And then if we take a Western take - position ourselves in a Western world view and look at gender and all those issues - do they rate for me? Well actually probably not, because this world view doesn't have enough of a voice in our work. In this organization. So I would ... I'm inclined to sort hold to the promotion of that world view being more visible in the organization's programmes.. (M: 37)

When I was doing preparation for the male respondent programme one of the questions was around the feminist model and all through training - I don't know how many of you are familiar with this, we had this thing about the feminist model and so it 's like okay, I know that that exists but its a thing whereas for me it might be one of the elements which sits inside my world view which is about being Māori. And so that's just an element when I'm talking to guys or talking to women about items of gender stuff but for them it's just an element for them the bigger picture is .... what's hau ora because that's really what they are put into to - what's the whanau like it's not really well he did that because of male privilege or what ever. You know those might be some of the weirdnesses, but they are not high up on the scale in terms of what's .... (M: 70)

In this study Māori voices call for general DVA programmes that is culturally appropriate for Māori, which will be grounded in their preferred territory of identities. The Māori we consulted stated clearly that current regulations prevent them from delivering culturally appropriate programmes because they are unable to work with whanau and to do longer term follow up work. Because of the limitations of programme requirements that are located in Western world view, Māori facilitators 'work around' the programme in order to work with clients in their whanau context. Facilitators who work with Māori need to be exemplars of tikanga, and to explore Māori ways of being. Finally, we must stop assuming that the philosophical underpinnings of pakeha programmes are appropriate for all clients.

In the next section, we make recommendations which are informed by this consultation with the Māori staff of Relationship Services Whakawhanaungatanga.

## VII

### REFLECTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

*How might we develop effective practice which is both accountable to the man's experiences and needs **and** to the experiences and needs of those who have been harmed by the abuse?*  
(Jenkins, 2009, p. 25)

#### **Drawing the threads together**

This research was about Domestic Violence programmes, the facilitators who present the programmes and their thoughts about the men and women who are directed to them. The project comprises three studies. Study One was concerned with hearing facilitators' voices about the work. We wanted to discover what was best practice and what got in the way of best practice. Study Two was concerned with the voices of those who had been recipients of the programmes. We were interested in their post programme evaluations. Study Three was concerned with hearing Māori voices. In particular we were interested in what works best for Māori in domestic violence programmes.

Much of the research we reviewed came out of North America or Australia and it appears that results are consistent across cultures. Our findings mirror those of other researchers who have evaluated programme efficacy and listened to the voices of those who have taken part in such programmes. These findings include the importance of the relationship between facilitator and client, the usefulness of strategies for managing anger/violence and the importance of the facilitator knowing when to challenge violent behaviour and when to listen to the client (Chalk, 2000; McMaster, Maxwell, & Anderson, 2000).

Our project used focus groups and separate gender caucusing and reflections on the summary of analysis (Study One), explored the evaluations of clients (Study Two), and consulted Māori in a Māori environment (Study Three). We believe that by focusing on the voices of those most closely involved in the work, we have uncovered information which may not have been brought forward had we limited ourselves to interviews only.

One of the unexpected outcomes in our research was the degree of polarization on gender issues when we separated participants into male and female caucuses. We were surprised not only about the gender polarization that arose, but also about the entrenched positions and pain that these positions brought with them. In follow-up reflections concerns were aired by participants about the possible effect on the work of the carrying of old gender and power issues by those who facilitate the programmes. This showed the gap in facilitator knowledge around gender discourse, power, and gender accountability, a gap, which might be present inconsistently. It seemed to us as if many (but not all) of the facilitators were at times unable to move beyond their own subjective knowledge of gender power relations. As researchers we recognize that we were unprepared for this outcome in the gender groups, and on reflection it would have been useful to have used a more structured caucus approach to deal with this. Hall (1996) in describing a gender focused accountability caucus called by Carey and White stressed the point that in order for the caucus to work clear boundaries and processes have to be established. Building on and developing a process developed by Tamasese and Waldegrave (1994), White and Carey had made it clear that their concerns were not simply the result of individual personal experiences, but were part of women's shared experience of attempting to speak out in a male-dominated culture. They were not looking for an opportunity to simply share feelings, and they did not want men to respond primarily to the emotional content of what was said. What they did want was to really focus on gender issues. We believe facilitators would benefit from looking more deeply at gender issues as they relate to men and women in New Zealand.

We believe such training is important in developing understanding of the way a gendered culture is supported by practices and beliefs as well as policy and law. The process of addressing and changing social injustices involves moving away from dichotomous thinking as well as race and gender essentialism. James and Saville-Smith (1989) made the point that repeatedly researching into the motives underlying the actions of women who are victims of domestic violence has pointed to women's feelings of responsibility. Sometimes this takes the form of guilt for triggering outbursts, but also fosters the belief that is the duty of women to 'tame' 'reform' 'control' - even 'protect' - their men (Dixon, 2002, 2000). This idea that women are needed by the very people who perpetrate violence on them has its genesis in discourses of women's moral superiority over men. This discourse creates traps for men and women and these were clearly visible in our research when the conversation of the women was listened to by the men who then talked about the experience of being silenced. Through this legacy of a gendered culture both women and men are simultaneously shaped by and are shaping gendered cultured assumptions. We believe that unravelling the processes of shaping gender is an important task for facilitators of domestic violence.

We are drawn to the words of Michael White who has the following to say:

I do not believe it is ever sufficient for men to take entire responsibility for perpetrating abuse, to identify the experience of those abused, to get in touch with the short term and possible long term effects of the abuse, to develop a sincere apology, to work on ways of repairing what might be repaired, and to challenge the attitudes that justify such behaviour and the conditions and techniques of power that makes abuse possible. If that is where it ends, although the man may experience genuine remorse, he is likely to reoffend because he has no other knowledges of men's ways of being to live by. For there to be any semblance of security that this will not occur, I believe that it is essential that these men be engaged in the identification and the performance of alternative knowledges of men's ways of being. (White, 1992, p. 147)

Our research supports this claim for reflexivity for both sexes. It is vital that women as well as men are continually encouraged to move beyond restrictive essentialist notions of being female. Change has to take place both on an individual and social level. As Denborough (1996, p. 111) reflects, “we will never bring about an end to violence simply by working with boys. Gender is negotiated. Boys define their gender identities in relation to the girls and women whom they know.” Our belief is that gender reflexivity is important in reflecting on facilitator practice.

In Study One, we discovered that facilitators agree that the first task of the facilitator is to engage with the client so that collaborative work can be done to eliminate violence and to increase safety. The facilitators in this study used a variety of methodologies in delivering the same programme and argued strongly for flexibility in matching content to the client’s concerns. They were concerned that programme requirements limited programme effectiveness, especially by excluding partners and families. We also discovered that talking about violence surfaced gender polarities alongside expressions of desire for gender collaboration, a discovery that has led us to review methods of gender (and cultural) accountability. While participants were aware of the effects of working with violence included emotional distress and the dangers of vicarious trauma, they had ways of managing the stress and of holding hope.

In Study Two we found that those who had completed domestic violence programmes found them useful. Both men and women respondents valued most learning strategies for reducing violence and managing emotions. Women protected persons valued being listened to and developing self-responsibility.

In Study Three we learned from our Māori consultants that for a programme to be culturally appropriate for Māori it must be located in Māori world view, and that Māori identity is central for living without violence. Accordingly, a facilitator of a programme for Māori clients needs to be able to work within Māori world view. We were convinced that as long as violence is seen as caused by a deficit within an individual and

respondent programmes as a result limited to individuals even if in a group, then cultural appropriateness is not possible.

These learnings have led us to exploration of the implications for ongoing practice and facilitator training. We present these learnings below.

## **Recommendations**

### **The need for cultural and gender accountability**

Our research has shown us that there is still a need for developing ways to ensure cultural and gender accountability in the field of DV programme delivery. Kiwi Tamasese and Charles Waldegrave recognized this need back in the nineties (Tamasese & Waldegrave, 1994). Working out of the Family Centre in Lower Hutt they formed an approach to therapy which emphasized social justice. They named their approach ‘just therapy’ which they said “attempts to reverse the societal bias against women and the dominated cultural groups” (p. 58). They described a process of caucusing that actually enabled groups from different positions of power to treat each other respectfully and to gain an insight into each other’s experience. We were intrigued to see that Tamasese and Waldegrave named “paralyzing, individualizing and patronizing” (ibid.) as three common responses to group or individually articulated concerns about gender or cultural bias. Their findings, while mirroring the findings of this project, also support the reading put forward by Davies (2000) of the binary created by being either a colonizer or the colonized. Within this binary the colonizers are either guilty or not guilty – it is not possible to be neither currently. Tamasese and Waldegrave describe ‘paralysis’ as a guilt response, which results in feelings of shame and subsequent impotence. ‘Individualizing’ they say is where ‘liberal’ or ‘sensitive’ people separate themselves from their cultural and gender histories then attempt to be paragons of cultural or gender equality. Tamasese & Waldegrave (1994) say that no matter how

committed a man is to women's equality, he may still continue to benefit at every level in a patriarchal society at their expense. They go on to say that the 'Patronizing' response refers to people from the discriminating group who become self-appointed spokespeople for the group their culture or gender oppresses (ibid.). Although they were articulating their concerns about these responses in 1994, our research shares very similar findings in 2010.

McLean, Carey, & White (1996) also suggest that accountability forums offer a practical way forward. They start from the recognition of the centrality of the silencing and marginalizing effects of structured power differences in our society. They then develop means of addressing them so that groups who have been marginalized and oppressed can have their voices heard. It is important to recognize that this concept of power differences and consequent accountability is primarily concerned with addressing injustice. Accountability structures provide members of the dominant group with the information necessary for them to stand against the oppressive practices implicit in their own culture, of which they will often be totally unaware. We were able to witness this experience first hand when the men's caucus attempted to respond to the women's caucus. The men seemed silenced and we saw them struggle to speak, as they wanted to respond in a helpful way. Some of the men seemed to be on the edge of articulating this difficulty but could not find the right words to do so.

McLean, Carey, & White (1996) caution however that accountability forums are not to be seen as simply ways of improving communication; rather they work on the following assumptions: i) in accountability forums different groups are definitely not equal, ii) the existence of injustices inflicted by one group upon others is not some sort of mistake or aberration that can be fixed by listening better and iii) there is no notion of compromise.

Our experience of the gender polarization that arose out of the gender caucuses in Study One and the emphasis on Māori world view in Study Three have led us to explore ways

of countering the long term complex effects of colonisation and patriarchy. We think that the use of these accountability processes for gender caucusing would be worthwhile in DVA facilitator training, and we develop our suggestions below.

### **The need for a clear understanding of gender and power**

The issue of gender power relations came up time and again in the focus groups and the men's and women's gender groups. As Hall (1996) says, "Power and self are central to working in the area of DV, and responsibility and blame are key words. Violence, power and gender are linked and many men have tried creative ways to deal with this" (p. 227).

Similarly Denborough (1996 p. 94) reminds us "our identities are suffused with issues of power and control. Identity, far from a universal or essentialist entity, is therefore a political construction." Therefore this also means that the choices we make are not totally free - rather, they are interrelating with far broader power relations, restrictions and options. Power relations are rooted in the whole network of the social and humans make themselves into subjects through power relations (Foucault, 2002). "This form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him [sic] by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects" (Foucault, 2002, p. 331).

We believe that the ideas expressed by Foucault (2002) and applied to domestic violence interventions by Hall (1996) and Deborough (1996) are useful in understanding the complexities of gender power relations. We argue that a clear understanding of the workings of power in the constitution of gendered subjectivities would give facilitators a place to stand when they work with both perpetrators and victims of violence. It would help facilitators move beyond fault and blame dichotomies, the consequences of which can be endlessly destructive.

During the men's caucus, most men spoke of their own painful journeys and the struggle they had in finding their own preferred territory to stand in as men. In his article entitled *The politics of men's pain*, McLean (1996) calls for men to reach a more sophisticated understanding of subjective masculine experience, that places it firmly in the context of gender inequality, domination and exploitation. The important thing is that this journey continues. It is not enough for male workers to have done their bit and then rest on their laurels. Doing this invites a position of 'them and us' (the men who abuse and the male facilitators who don't abuse), which Jenkins describes as unhelpful and unethical in DV work.

The recommendation that we have drawn from participants' conversations is that male and female facilitators continue forth in their ongoing parallel ethical journey and that this be supported by the agencies that employ them. The training need is not so much 'how to deliver the DVA programme' but more the facilitator's parallel political journey, alongside understandings of the way gendered subjectivities are constructed and internalized. It therefore seems important that work with abusive men continue to be carried out by men (in the same way that the female victims and perpetrators of abuse work with female facilitators). We suggest that in order to move away from the male / female, victim / perpetrator binary it would be helpful if female facilitators were invited to sit in on male respondent sessions. We believe this will help women facilitators to move beyond the polarized places they often find themselves in as well as giving male facilitators and respondents a structure for accountability practices.

We also suggest that parallel accountability practices are developed for pakeha work with Māori. We are aware that this is more logistically difficult because of the demands on Māori practitioners, and we wonder whether DV supervision might be a place where accountability to Māori might be practised.

## **The need for connection and respect**

This finding was strongly reinforced by both users of the programme and those who delivered it. Facilitators emphasized the centrality of facilitator-client connection and, in their evaluations clients told us that they valued their connection with the facilitator. The Māori consultants also spoke about the importance of the facilitator's understanding of the client's world. It seems that the quality of the connection is paramount to the quality and effectiveness of the work done. This finding mirrored the content of much of the literature regarding the success of DVA programmes.

It appears that this idea of connection or relationship is very important for DVA programme facilitators because of the stipulation that programmes be seen as educational and not therapeutic, which is at times understood to undervalue the importance of the relationship between facilitator and client. In education as in therapy, respect and compassion are essential expressions of an attitude of acceptance without judgment of persons (Jenkins, 1996). The false dichotomy causes concern for counsellors who facilitate programmes, and they often stumble around the notion of 'relationship' between programme facilitator and client. Alan Jenkins maintains the issue of respect is critical. "I am convinced that interventions which are disrespectful to either party inadvertently contribute to the maintenance and even exacerbation of abusive behaviour" (Jenkins 1996, p. 119).

The confusion caused by the polarization of education versus therapy seemed to cause problems for programme delivery when facilitators began to think that having empathy with the client might be seen as colluding with the abuse. The idea of reaching out towards the world of the abusive man and trying to locate him in his own world was a strong theme that came from facilitators who had worked in the field for many years. Participants spoke of the lack of emphasis on connection and respect in current RSW programmes. They understood the significance of the connection which Jenkins (2009) names 'generous love' 'compassion' and 'respect for difference.' A clear understanding about the kind of connection needed in order to do the work in the room is vital in DVA

programme delivery and DVA training. We recommend that RSW programmes include the importance of engagement and respectful collaborative practice.

### **The need for facilitator reflexivity: The personal is political**

Participants in Study One spoke about the usefulness of talking with colleagues in formal or informal supervision as a way to reflect on practice. There is much written about the need for men working in the field of domestic violence to constantly self-monitor, review and debrief with colleagues (Jenkins 1996, 2009; Hall 1996; Augusta-Scott 2007). In particular it is important for male workers to see the part they play in the reproduction of male ways of being. In this project we discovered that while reflexivity on gender is inevitable for a reflective male practitioner working with men, it might not be usual for women working with women. Similarly, reflexivity for pakeha facilitators on cultural identity would include reflecting on one's own whiteness (Haggis, Schech & Fitzgerald, 1999; Naughton & Tudor, 2006).

Jenkins (2009) warns that there is a constant need to break down the 'us and them' mentality, which he calls a delusion that is particularly seductive for people working with abuse. Jenkins reminds us that this delusion can mask the continuum of abusive behaviour in our own experience and in the general community.

Writing about his 15 years of working in the field of abuse Jenkins (1996) candidly describes his own difficulties with what he calls his "inner tyrant." This is what he names his reactions to hearing denial, minimization and justification in the face of horrific abuse with horrific tendencies. He says there is a mistaken belief that 'tyranny' can be avoided through 'emotional detachment.' Rather he suggests that these feelings of tyranny - (feelings of wanting to make the abusive man see sense, or knock some sense into him, to make him see what it is like, to break down his denial, to write him off as someone who is evil bad and uncaring) be identified, named and expressed, at times in the form of serious reflection and debriefing, and at other times in the form of black

humour. He adds that these practices of expression and reflection must be taken seriously in organizations and agencies where sufficient time should be set aside for them. "Failure to find a balance between acknowledging these experiences and preventing them from dominating our practices will result in minimizing abusive behaviour, dulling our own experiences, compromising our self respect and discounting and disrespecting both those who abuse and those who suffer abuse ... If I am no longer deeply outraged and saddened by abusive behaviour, then I have become part of the problem" (Jenkins, 1996, p. 123).

Jenkins (2009) has gone on to develop this idea further and now calls for workers in the field of Domestic Violence to take a parallel, political journey with men who have abused. The need for forums for male facilitators to come together and talk about the effects of this work on them as men is well recognized, but often difficult to co-ordinate. Those who have been involved in the work for many years said they do not need opportunities for more training as such, but they did clearly articulate the need to be able to come together with other male facilitators to talk about the effects of this work on their lives and relationships and the men they work with.

Women facilitators' need for reflexivity is not addressed to the same extent. As we reflected on the gendered polarisations which appeared in the gendered focus groups in Study One, we wondered whether ways of thinking and speaking about gender/power and violence among women tend to access deeply embedded perpetrator-victim binaries rather than unravelling the complexities of gender positioning in interpersonal conflicts. We recommend that women explore how femininity is enacted in DVA sessions in like manner to men facilitators' explorations of the constitution of masculinity. We suggest that such explorations belong in co-gendered supervision and ongoing facilitator trainings. Further, we recommend that pakeha facilitators reflect on the implications of being white in Aotearoa. We believe that gender and cultural reflexivity will make visible to facilitators the possible effects that unexamined personal ways of being have on connections with clients and the effectiveness of the work they

do.

### **The need for culturally appropriate programmes**

The consultation with Māori staff in Study 3 highlighted the need for DVA programme regulations to support Māori to be able to develop whanau based programmes which focus on identity and cultural values as the foundation for living violence free. We recommend that in accordance with the recommendations of the second edition (2004) update of the report from the former Second Māori Taskforce on Whanau Violence, new guidelines be developed which enable tikanga and general programmes to include whanau.

### **The need for accountability practices**

Another constant theme in our research was ‘how do we work with individuals who are isolated from their families in order to do the work?’ This isolation means working without the people who were most affected by the violence. Facilitators expressed concern that they were often ‘working blind’ - not seeing the ‘whole picture.’ They expressed concern about working with a perpetrator without being able to monitor the effects on the victim. Some felt it was impossible to work with only one half of a partnership because they held the belief that “It takes two to tango.” Others said it was important to see the partner because the perpetrator would be going back to some kind of relationship with the partner - whether it was a continuing relationship or a relationship as parents if the couple were separating. Participants’ concerns are supported by the literature. Which shows that there is a need for practices of accountability to the victims of violence/abuse (Augusta-Todd, 2001; Bennett & Williams, 2001; Chovanec, 2009; Gondolf, 2002; Hall, 1996; Jenkins, 2009; Verco, 2001).

These practices are complemented by the notion of what Jenkins (2009, p. 29) calls “limited confidentiality,” an approach we suggest could be considered. Confidentiality is limited in order to provide feedback to family and community members about the

nature and goals of the intervention and the man's participation and attendance. Family and community members might be notified of any concerns the facilitator may have about the safety or well being of family members as a result of actions or comments by the perpetrator. It is highly recommended by Jenkins that the explanation and discussion of limited confidentiality take place when the man is ready to listen and consider the possibilities it may offer otherwise such a conversation will most likely be perceived as judgmental and restrictive. This underlines the delicate balance that needs to take place in the work so that safety, responsibility, accountability, fairness, and respect are privileged in an on-going manner. Jenkins (2009) reminds us that this calls for an ongoing reflection and critique that is situated in a political rather than a psychological context.

Accountability practices are already in place where both partners are doing respondent and protected persons' programmes concurrently. Traditionally co-gendered facilitation has enabled accountability, and also when men have supervision with a female supervisor, caucus regularly with women who run programmes for protected persons, or maintain ongoing connections with other community agencies in the domestic violence field. However they take place, accountability practices help to keep those who work with the perpetrators of violence/abuse honest and are a necessity in the work in order to ensure that their work is sensitive to and informed by the experiences and needs of those who have been the victims of the violence. We recommend that these practices are endorsed and noticed as supporting programme effectiveness.

### **The need for flexibility in programmes**

Those facilitators who had many years experience had fewer concerns about the limitations of DVA programme regulations and administrative requirements than those who have come into the work more recently. Experienced facilitators are able to draw on their experiences and had found a 'rightness of fit' in terms of how they worked within the regulations and practice guidelines of RSW and Ministry of Justice DVA

regulations. They talked about the importance of flexibility in adapting the timing of programme exercises to match the client's situation at each meeting.

Despite their ability to use the programme flexibly, facilitators expressed concerns about the need to keep pace with changing needs, for example accountability practices and working with whanau, concerns which came out of both pakeha male and Māori focus groups. Interestingly female pakeha facilitators were very cautious about claims that it would be easier to work with the whole family or the partner as well. This fits with many of the male facilitators' claims that violence was more of a shared endeavour while the female facilitators were concerned about safety and said that it was not helpful to work with the victim in that context.

However, this position changes when culture is added to the equation. As Māori are embedded in a collective culture, they could not see the usefulness of working with the perpetrator alone. We have offered a way forward from this binary by suggesting that accountability practices are used – for example the structure of limited confidentiality as described above. We do not wish to underestimate the importance of safety, and suggest that where shared sessions are to take place (including those perpetrators who are sent to couples' counselling via the route of Restorative Justice), very careful assessment practices be used (see for example, Ptacek, 2010; Jenkins, 2000; Bograd, 1999).

We are concerned that the regulations for writing programmes encourage the flexibility that is vital in delivering a programme to meet client needs. We value clear objectives and materials in programmes, but agree with participants that we would appreciate guidelines for checking in with clients in such a way to ensure that any programme session will be relevant to their situation.

### **The need for revising post-programme evaluation forms**

We found the present post-programme evaluation forms very difficult to use confidently as indicators of programme outcomes. We recommend that forms include

the programme that is completed, the sex and ethnicity of the client and the facilitator, and that items are revised so that they give specific measurable information about what was effective and has led to changes in attitudes and behaviours. This will make future research more detailed and more reliable.

### **Summary of recommendations**

We recommend that the voices from the field are listened to carefully, and that DVA programmes are adapted accordingly. We conclude this report with following recommendations:

- ❖ That facilitator training includes exploration of the complexity of gender and power relations in understanding violence and the people who experience it
- ❖ That male and female facilitators become familiar with each others' work through co-facilitation, group or cross gender supervision or training.
- ❖ That women facilitators explore how femininity is enacted in DVA sessions in like manner to men facilitators' explorations of the constitution of masculinity.
- ❖ That pakeha facilitators make their work accountable to Māori through consultation and/or supervision
- ❖ That facilitator training includes exploration of engagement and the respectful and collaborative practice which fosters compassion rather than blame
- ❖ That RSW programmes include the importance of engagement and respectful collaborative practice.
- ❖ That facilitator training and supervision include practices of reflexivity with attention to what might be invisible in our work with clients when we overlook the effects of masculinity, femininity, whiteness or any other place of privilege in Aotearoa.
- ❖ That facilitator training and supervision include practices of reflexivity with attention to what might be invisible in our work with clients when we

overlook our own collusion with or judgments about violence in our society.

- ❖ That in accordance with the recommendations of the second edition (2004) update of the report from the former Second Māori Taskforce on Whanau Violence, guidelines for programmes recognise that culturally appropriate programmes for Māori will enable working with whanau.
- ❖ That practices of gender and cultural accountability are assessed as part of programme effectiveness.
- ❖ That clear objectives and materials in programmes and ongoing training and supervision include guidelines for checking in with clients in such a way to ensure that any programme session will be relevant to their situation.
- ❖ That post-programme evaluation forms are revised.

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## Appendix A - Information for potential participants

**Relationship Services  
Whakawhanaungatanga**

*helping you find your own answers*



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON  
*Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui*



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear: \_\_\_\_\_,

### **Voices from the field: Learnings from the past 15 years of DVA programme delivery**

#### **Invitation to Participate**

You have probably heard about the research project that Relationship Services Whakawhanaungatanga (RSW) is undertaking to study facilitators' ideas about best practices in Domestic Violence (DV) programmes. The goal of this study is to identify successful practices for the facilitation of Domestic Violence Act programmes. Kay O'Connor and Glenda Dixon plan to bring together a group of experienced facilitators and engage you in conversations about successful practice. These conversations will take place in two focus groups which will be video recorded. In each focus group the themes will be discussed and clarified in an ongoing way so that you, the participants, have a say in what constitutes the important conversations. We also plan to have follow-up one-on-one interviews if necessary to clarify and extend some of the themes. As a result of the research we will be able to make recommendations for best practice with regard to DVA programmes. This letter explains what your participation would involve and what you may need to consider before agreeing to take part. Attached is a consent form to send us if you want to take part in the research. This project has been approved by the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee. Dr Jeremy Robertson of the Roy McKenzie Centre for the Study of Families is acting as the research mentor for this project.

#### **What will happen**

- There will be a two day RSW training workshop for experienced DVA facilitators.
- Themes to be discussed in focus groups will be collected from the training group.
- On each of the two days there will be a focus group conversation that will last one to two hours each, and will be videotaped and the tapes transcribed.
- The texts of the transcriptions will be analysed thematically, and a summary of the analyses returned to you.
- After the focus groups we will also have one to one conversations with some participants to explore some themes more fully. These conversations may be in person or by email. We will ask you to consent to the transcripts of these interviews to be included in the data for analysis before we can use your contributions.
- You can decide at any time that you do not want to answer any specific question or to withdraw completely from the project. You do not have to justify any decisions to

withdraw. You can withdraw from further participation in the study at any time until the analysis has been completed (1<sup>st</sup> December 2009).

- We may use some quotes in our reports, but these will be anonymous and no one will be able to identify who made these quotes.
- Should you find participating in this research raises issues that cannot be dealt with in the training group, RSW will approve EAP counselling for you.

### **Benefits to participants**

Most of the benefits will be intangible, including opportunities in a safe environment to reflect on the work, share experiences and to have the opportunity to explore issues that are concerning you. We plan to produce a resource from the collective wisdom of the group which will be a resource for programme facilitators within RSW and for any interested colleagues in our communities.

### **Research questions**

- What do we know about best practice from our 15 years in the business of developing and delivering DVA programmes?
- What can we learn from 15 years in the field about engaging mandatory clients in change?
- What client knowledge/skills/attitudes lead to changes in their behaviour?
- Which facilitator practices have we found that encourage change?
- What helps the transfer of knowledge/skills/attitudes from the sessions to everyday practices/behaviour change?
- What are the key literature/ training/ resources that have informed practice?
- How can we best make our 15 years' experience available to theorise and inform the field?
- How can we mine this expertise, give voice to practitioners, and inform ongoing practice?
- What supports facilitators' ongoing commitment and energy for the work?
- How can we use these rich sources of information to inform future policy/practice?

### **What to do next**

(a) If you would like to know more, or talk about the project before making any kind of decision, please feel free to contact either of us.

Glenda 021 058 2746, [kadix@paradise.net.nz](mailto:kadix@paradise.net.nz)

Kay 021 0380418, [kayoconnor@xtra.co.nz](mailto:kayoconnor@xtra.co.nz)

Jeremy Robertson 04 463 6831, [Jeremy.robertson@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Jeremy.robertson@vuw.ac.nz)

(b) If you would like to participate and feel that you are happy with this information, please sign the enclosed consent form, and return as soon as possible in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Glenda Dixon

Kay O'Connor

Jeremy Robertson

## Appendix B – Consent form

**Relationship Services  
Whakawhanaungatanga**

*helping you find your own answers*



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON  
*Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui*



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

### **Voices from the field: Learnings from the past 15 years of DVA programme delivery**

#### **Phase 1 Focus groups: Informed Consent**

I \_\_\_\_\_ consent to becoming a participant in the focus groups for the research on DVA programme facilitation that is being conducted by Relationship Services Whakawhanaungatanga (RSW).

I understand that the research will be embedded in the two day training for experienced facilitators and that participation will be invited from the pool of those counsellors and facilitators who express interest and give consent.

I understand that the two focus groups conversations during the training days will be videotaped, the tapes transcribed and analysed by the research team and that the summarised analysis will be returned to all participants for comment.

I have read the information sheet and the research questions have been shown to me and I am happy to discuss these questions. I understand that I do not have to answer any particular questions.

I understand that the research will use pseudonyms, the research materials will be kept in confidential and secure files, and that no identifying comments will be included either in any materials being distributed during the research process nor in any subsequent reports of the research.

## Consent

I consent to taking part in the focus group part of this study and to the results being used for a subsequent Report to RSW and the Lotteries Commission, and for academic conference papers and articles for publication.

Please sign your consent below and send in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone:

email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
—

Preferred method(s) of contact:    phone / letter / email (circle as many as are preferred)

Preferred place of contact:        home / work (delete one)

Thank you for considering participation in this project

Glenda Dixon, Kay O'Connor and Jeremy Robertson

### Researcher contact details

Glenda                      021 058 2746

[kadix@paradise.net.nz](mailto:kadix@paradise.net.nz)

Kay                            021 0380418

[kayoconnor@xtra.co.nz](mailto:kayoconnor@xtra.co.nz)

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